

HRISTIANITY TODAY

PUBLISHED FORTNIGHTLY

Uses of the Apocrypha
BRUCE M. METZGER

Revelation, History and the Bible GEORGE ELDON LADD

Ecumenism and the Lord's Table R. J. RUSHDOONY

Lost River of Paradise

The Drive for IMC-WCC Merger

EDITORIAL:

Oberlin: Unity and Mission

Annual Index

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RIGHT AND WRONG

Uses of the Apocrypha

BRUCE M. METZGER

The word "Apocrypha" commonly denotes the fourteen or fifteen books which are present in Greek and Latin manuscripts of the Old Testament but which are not included in the canon of the Hebrew Old Testament. Most of them were written during the period between the close of the Old Testament and opening of the New Testament.

The apocryphal books represent a variety of literary forms. Some are historical in content (such as I Esdras and I and II Maccabees); others resemble the Book of Proverbs (such as Ecclesiasticus); one is a devotional piece (The Prayer of Manasseh); one stands in the succession of the prophetical books (Baruch); still others are moralizing novels and entertaining legends (such as the books of Tobit, Susanna, Judith, and Bel and the Dragon).

In view of the fact that these books have been recently translated into English by a group of the Standard Bible Committee and published by Thomas Nelson and Sons (September 30), it is appropriate to review some right and wrong uses of the Apocrypha. First, however, it will be useful to put them in correct historical perspective.

APOCRYPHA IN ENGLISH BIBLES

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It may be a surprise to some that the books of the Apocrypha were included in all English Bibles of the sixteenth century (that is, Coverdale's translation, Tyndale's translation, the Geneva version, the Bishops' Bible, etc.), as well as in the King James Version or so-called Authorized Version of 1611. In fact, one of the translators of the King James Version, George Abbot, as Archbishop of Canterbury, issued a decree in 1615 that if any printer should dare to bind up and sell a copy of the Bible without the Apocrypha he would be liable to a whole year's imprisonment. Despite this decree, however, during subsequent centuries fewer and fewer Bibles were published containing the

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Apocrypha, and today virtually the only editions of the King James Version containing the Apocrypha are the large Bibles found on the pulpits of most Protestant churches.

Two main factors operated in the dropping of the books of the Apocrypha. One was an economic consideration; since the books of the Apocrypha are almost as long as the New Testament in bulk, it is cheaper to print and bind Bibles without these books. Chiefly, however, it was for doctrinal considerations that they fell out of general usage among Protestants.

DOCTRINAL STATEMENTS

Although Jerome at the close of the fourth century clearly differentiated between the canonical books of the Hebrew Old Testament and the others which circulated in Greek and Latin manuscripts, most people during the Middle Ages who used his Latin Vulgate translation quoted indiscriminately from both canonical and apocryphal books alike. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, Luther and Calvin once again reiterated Jerome's fundamental distinction. The reason they insisted upon this distinction was that certain Roman Catholic practices and emphases (including the efficacy of prayers and masses for the dead in purgatory, and stress upon merit acquired through good works) were based largely upon texts in the Apocrypha. Such a use of the Apocrypha, the Reformers maintained, attributed to these books an authority which they did

On the other hand, the Reformers also recognized the proper use of the Apocrypha. Luther, for example, in his very influential German translation of the Scriptures (1534) gathered together all but two of the books of the Apocrypha (he did not include I and II Esdras) and printed them between the Old and New Testaments with this heading: "Apocrypha—that is, books which are not held equal to the Holy Scriptures, and yet are profitable and good to read." He also provided prefaces before the text of the several books of the Apocrypha, in which he pointed out the ethical and devotional help which Christians could derive from perusing these books. His edition of the Bible

formed the basis for the first Bibles to be translated into Swedish (1541), Danish (1550), Icelandic (1584), and Slovenian (1584), all of which have the Apocrypha with Luther's heading and prefaces.

Similarly, Reformed churches in France and part of Switzerland used the first Protestant translation of the Bible in French (1535), which was prepared by Pierre Robert Olivétan, Calvin's cousin; this contained the books of the Apocrypha. Olivétan's rendering, revised by Calvin (1545), was reissued in 1551, with a new translation of the Apocrypha by Theodore Beza.

As a reaction to Protestant insistence on the fundamental difference between canonical and the apocryphal writings, at the Council of Trent (1546) an anathema was pronounced upon anyone who would not receive as sacred and canonical all the books in the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible. This decree, it should be noted, was arrived at only after prolonged debate and the opposition of some of the more learned of the Roman prelates, who were well aware that the distinction between the Hebrew canon and the apocryphal books had been maintained from the time of Jerome by a succession of Catholic scholars, including even Cardinal Ximenes and Cardinal Cajetan, Luther's opponent.

Now that the Roman church had moved to canonize certain apocryphal books (namely, all but I and II Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh, which are printed as an appendix after the New Testament in the official editions of the Latin Vulgate), it was natural that some Protestants would tend to deprecate any and all use of the Apocrypha. Thus it came about that, though Luther had declared these books to be "profitable and good to read," others, in reaction to the use made of them by the Romanists, refused to have anything whatever to do with them. Not all, however, took this extreme position. In the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican or Episcopal church, issued in 1562, it is declared that, though uninspired, these books are "read for example of life and instruction of manners" (Art. VI). After lengthy debate as to the merits of the intertestamental books, the representatives of the Reformed churches meeting at the Synod of Dort (1618) voted that the new official translation of the Bible, which had just been decreed, should include the Apocrypha, placed after the New Testament. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), though sometimes popularly thought to forbid the reading of the Apocrypha, actually only cautions against their improper use, stating that these books "not being of divine inspiration . . . are not . . . to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings" (Chap. I,

In commenting on the attitude of Protestants respecting the disputed books, Œcolampadius, perhaps

on the whole the best representative of the Swiss Reformers, declared in a formal statement: "We do not despise Judith, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the last two books of Esdras, the books of Maccabees, the additions to Daniel; but we do not allow them divine authority with the others." Here he clearly distinguishes between proper and improper use of the intertestamental books.

USEFULNESS OF APOCRYPHA

There is an old Latin proverb to the effect that the abuse of anything does not do away with its use. Granted that the Apocrypha are not inspired and that the Roman church erred in elevating them to canonical status, the intertestamental literature is far from being without value for Protestants.

In the first place, these books are useful in interpreting and elucidating various aspects of Western culture. In English literature, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Ruskin, Longfellow and many others have borrowed more or less freely themes and statements from the Apocrypha. In art, many of the old masters, as well as several modern painters, have chosen subjects from this body of literature. In music, such hymns as "Now Thank We All Our God," "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," and dozens of Charles Wesley's compositions disclose the adoption of ideas, phrases and even whole sections from the Apocrypha. Anthems, oratorios and several operas incorporate material from these books. Even Christopher Columbus was influenced in his decision to sail westward by a passage in II Esdras. (Since there is not room here to document these instances of the pervasive influence of the Apocrypha, perhaps the author may be allowed to refer those who are interested to his recent book, An Introduction to the Apocrypha, Oxford University Press, where all these and many more examples are discussed.)

In the second place, just as the works of the ancient Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, are useful to the serious student of the New Testament, so too the apocryphal books throw much light upon the history of the Jews between the Old and New Testaments. The development of the sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees; the growth of interest in the coming of the Messiah; the extension of beliefs regarding angels and demons; the dissemination of the doctrine of the resurrection—in all these respects the Apocrypha provide great assistance in tracing the growth of institutions and beliefs which are taken for granted everywhere in the New Testament but of which there is scarcely an allusion in the Old Testament. All such study constitutes the proper use of the Apocrypha.

In the third place, despite the presence of obviously frivolous and superstitious statements in some of the apocryphal books, it cannot be denied that they also contain several passages of great inspirational and devotional value. The saintly Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, one of the translators of the King James Version of the Bible, incorporated the greater part of the apocryphal Prayer of Manasseh in his book of *Private Devotions*, and thus made it widely familiar to users of that excellent devotional aid. In conducting funeral services many a minister who reads the words of a hymn of comfort, or Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar," also may use the exalted passage in the Wisdom of Solomon, beginning, "The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment will ever touch them" (3:1-5).

PROPER ATTITUDE

John Bunyan provides an instructive example of a sane and sensible attitude toward the Apocrypha. In his remarkable autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, Bunyan describes how in 1652 he received help to overcome a lengthy period of

spiritual despondency from the text, "Look at the generations of old, and see; did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded?" Though he could not at first locate this verse, when at length he found it in the Apocrypha (Ecclus. 2:10), he was honest enough to confess that "this, at the first, did somewhat daunt me; but . . . when I considered, that though it was not in those Texts that we call Holy and Canonical, yet forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the Promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it; and I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me." He concludes this moving account with the admission, "That word doth still, at times, shine before my face" (section 62 ff).

As a postscript, one may ask whether it is too farfetched to speculate what might have been the result if Bunyan had not been somewhat familiar with the Apocrypha. In that case, humanly speaking, he might never have overcome his spiritual despondency and consequently might never have written his immortal allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Revelation, History, and the Bible

GEORGE ELDON LADD

At the heart of biblical religion is revelation. The presupposition of biblical religion is that man's predicament is so involved that he is incapable of finding God. Left to himself, man's religious quest leads to futility. However, God has not left man to himself. God has taken the initiative to bring to men that which they could not achieve: knowledge of God and fellowship which grows out of that knowledge. This divine activity involves both redemption and revelation. God has acted to impart to men, who are in bondage to ignorance and sin, knowledge of and fellowship with himself.

ROLE OF THE BIBLE

The role of the Bible in revelation is vigorously debated in contemporary theological discussion. Orthodox

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theology has maintained that revelation has taken place in the Bible, that the Scriptures themselves are divine revelation, that the Bible is the Word of God. A powerful reaction to this traditional theology has arisen with the insistence that the medium of revelation is redemptive history rather than a book. The content of revelation is held to be not truth about God to be stated in propositional form; it is God himself who through revelation imparts himself to man. Revelation conveys not knowledge about God but knowledge of God.

A vigorous and stimulating presentation of this modern point of view may be found in John Baillie's American Bampton lectures delivered at Columbia University (The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought, New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 1956). Baillie has some excellent passages on the historical character of biblical religion. Other sacred books consist of oracles setting forth timeless truths to instruct man in his conduct and worship. The Bible records what God has done to bring man into fellowship with himself. The Mosaic law is set apart from other legal codes in

being based upon a covenant between Israel and God which is conceived as taking place in history. The prophetic oracles differ from other oracles in antiquity in that they were concerned with the meaning of definite historical situations rather than with timeless truth. While the great philosophies offer a new interpretation of old and universal facts and pagan religions attempt to provide men with a new relationship to an old situation, biblical religion has something new to announce. God has done something. New events have occurred which place men in a situation in which they have never been before (pp. 52f). The Gospel is indeed "good news."

Through this historical revelation culminating in Christ, says Baillie, God has not merely made himself known; he has given himself that men might enter into fellowship with God. If revelation consisted chiefly of theological propositions, the reaction required of men would be intellectual assent. This, however, is not what God requires; it is rather complete committal, truth, that there might ensue a life of fellowship with and dependence upon God.

There is indeed, Baillie admits, an element of assent in revelation; but this intellectual element plays a distinctly subordinate role in man's response to God's act. Only wholehearted trust which replies to God's giving of himself in revelation is an adequate response. In fact, such a response is necessary for revelation actually to exist. Revelation is never complete, i.e., the process of the divine impartation is never consummated without this human response.

REVELATION OR WITNESS?

In this process, Baillie insists, the Bible is not revelation but a witness to revelation. It is both a record of what God has done in revelation and the response of men contemporary with the divine act which completes the revelation. As men in subsequent ages read the witness and, led by the Spirit, respond to God's revelatory act in Christ, as did the prophets and the apostles so that the prophetic response becomes our response, then revelation again becomes a completed reality.

This theology of revelation as recital and response rather than as proposition is offered as a challenge to the traditional view that the Bible is part of revelation. The traditional view which is no longer acceptable to thinkers like Baillie is described as "an ecclesiastical formulation which identified revelation with the written word of Scripture and gave to the action of God in history the revelational status only of being among the things concerning which Scripture informed us" (p. 62). In other words, orthodoxy is accused of emphasizing the role of the Bible in revelation to the practical exclusion of revelation in historical events.

This "ecclesiastical formulation" is not the only inter-

pretation held by modern orthodox theologians. There is no reason why the orthodox understanding of revelation requires a denial of special or revelatory history. On the other hand, cordial recognition of history as the vehicle of revelation does not lead to a denial that the Bible is itself a part of revelation. The role of redemptive history in revelation is recognized, if not stressed, by Carl F. H. Henry in his essay, "Divine Revelation and the Bible" (In Inspiration and Interpretation, John W. Walvoord, ed., Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1957, pp. 253-278). "Special revelation involves unique historical events of divine deliverance. . . . The category of revelation is therefore broader than the category of the spoken and written words of Scripture, since it covers special historic events which the Bible normatively interprets. . . . Revelation cannot, therefore, be equated simply with the Hebrew Christian Scriptures; the Bible is a special segment with a larger divine activity of revelation" (ibid., pp. 254f).

Certainly Henry's view squares with the teachings of Scripture. The Bible is very conscious that God has spoken unto the fathers in the prophets in diverse manners (Heb. 1:1). One of these modes of conveying the Word of God is historical events. We need not be afraid of the affirmation that God has revealed himself in redemption history. In fact, apart from this redemptive history, there would be no revelation and no Bible.

We may agree with Baillie that the historical character of biblical religion is one of the elements which determines both its distinctiveness and its glory. Theology is not simply a set of universal truths, a system of philosophical concepts. The so-called "old liberalism" of men like Adolf von Harnack is subject to the criticism that it reduced the kernel of Christianity to a few religious truths of universal character: the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the infinite value of the human soul and the ethic of love. This is not biblical Christianity. The Bible asserts that God has done something, that God has been active in the stream of redemptive history and has finally himself entered history in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ, to bring lost men into fellowship with himself. God is indeed revealed in the historical Jesus. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

HISTORY AND RELATIVITY

There is indeed one important circle of contemporary theological thought which is embarrassed by the historical character of revelation, for it seems to make theology dependent upon the relativities of historical research. The modern understanding of history often takes offense at the idea that one "piece" or strand of history can contain meanings which are absolute and by which all other history is judged. The effort has

therefore been made to free Christian theology from its involvement in history while retaining the theological values of orthodoxy—an effort which has not been successfully accomplished (See Paul King Jewett, Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation, London, James Clarke, 1954).

While we may agree that the events of redemptive history are revelatory, that God has spoken in the events of the history of Israel and above all in Jesus Christ, we must insist that much contemporary theological thought has not adequately understood the role of the Bible in revelation. Revelation in acts is not left to speak for itself. Revelation in historical events might not always be recognized as such. Baillie recognizes this fact and, following C. H. Dodd, admits that history consists of the historical occurrence plus its interpretation or meaning. It is the total structure of historical events plus their interpretation which is God's Word to man. The events by themselves are capable of other explanations, but the prophetic interpretation recognizes the divine activity in the historical event, and this prophetic interpretation becomes itself a new event (p. 69).

NORMATIVE INTERPRETATION

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This is indeed the biblical pattern. However, a problem arises at this point: does the biblical concept of revelation recognize any normative and authoritative element in the prophetic interpretation of the revelatory historical events? Neo-orthodox theologians see little that is authoritative in the interpretation. They hold that the prophetic interpretation is a human response which completes the divine act in history so that it becomes revelation to the person responding. This view insists that the Bible is a witness to the act-revelation and the record of the human response which completes it. The man who today reads the witness to revelation and responds as did the prophets and apostles enters into the same experience of revelation. God becomes reality to him as he did to them.

This, however, is not the biblical pattern. Rather, the interpretation is not merely a human reaction to the divine act but is also a divine act. The prophetic interpretation is itself the Word of God which is necessary to convey the divine meaning of the historical events. Redemptive history has a character of once-for-allness. Christ died. The death of Christ is an unrepeatable event. Christ died for our sins. This apostolic interpretation of the death of Christ also shares this character of once-for-allness. There is indeed variety of interpretation, but it is not a variety of contradiction but of richness of meaning. There are divinely intended meanings in the events of redemptive history which are not always self-evident. These meanings are conveyed in the prophetic and

the apostolic interpretation. Therefore the total revelatory event includes the *historical act plus the prophetic interpretation*; and both share the character of oncefor-allness. There must indeed be a human response to revelation as each individual embraces the redemptive act of God for his own experience. This, however, is not revelation but illumination. My experience does not share the authoritative character of the apostolic interpretation, nor does it give rise to new and equally authoritation meanings.

THE MEANING OF CALVARY

We may here cite only one illustration to demonstrate this fundamental principle that the revelatory event consists of occurrence plus authoritative meaning. The death of Christ is an historical event. Paul says that it is the proof, the demonstration of the love of God (Rom. 5:8). How do we know that Christ's love discloses the love of God? Were the Roman soldiers conscious of God's love as they watched Jesus die? Were the few disciples who stayed close to the cross drawn there because they realized that in this act God was demonstrating his love for them? Was the love of God in Christ's death self-evident? Does Golgotha speak for itself? On the contrary, the disciples thought that the end of their world had come. Their reaction was, "We had hoped. . . ." (Lk. 24:21 RSV).

An answer frequently given to this problem is that the theological understanding of Christ's death grew out of Christian experience. However, the fact seems to be that Christian experience arose only where there was already a theological interpretation of the meaning of Christ's death. Only when the Resurrection reversed the apparent catastrophe of his death, only when the risen Christ himself interpreted the meaning of his death (Lk. 24:26-27), only when the apostles set forth the unseen, divine activity in an otherwise tragic event, did it begin to convey a new significance and to be recognized for what it was: an act of God's love. We know that Jesus' death shows the love of God only because of the prophetic interpretation of that event. This interpretation is a given, and it is normative, authoritative. It cannot be displaced by any alternative interpretation, for it is itself revelation which comes from God. The authoritative apostolic interpretation has been crystallized and deposited in the written New Testament Scriptures, which are therefore themselves revelation, the Word of God.

This analysis indicates the role of the Bible in revelation. The prophetic words of interpretation were sometimes spoken, sometimes written. Sometimes they preceded act-revelation, sometimes they followed, and sometimes they both preceded and followed. But interpretative words are always necessary. Revelation is never left to speak for itself.

Thus God's revelatory acts were consummated in Jesus Christ. He is an historical character, and Christianity stands or falls with the historicity of his person and ministry. But revelation is not itself consummated in Jesus Christ, for the event of Christ is not "bare" event; the meaning of the "Christ event" is set forth in the apostolic interpretation, i.e., in our New Testament. This interpretation is itself revelation, consisting of the divinely initiated tradition of the meaning of what God did and said in Christ. The events of redemptive history can never be repeated, nor can the prophetic interpretation ever be repeated. Both are normative; both participate in the character of once-forallness. The experience of the apostles and prophets included two elements: a personal realization of God, and a normative interpretation of the divine revelatory events. The first is repeatable in Christian experience; the second is unique.

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

Thus revelation is never consummated apart from the inspired interpretation of the apostles and prophets. In biblical days the interpretation was of necessity, in part at least, in spoken form. This inspired interpretation is now inscripturated in the Word of God written. The writing of the inspired Scriptures is therefore an essential part of the activity of God in redemptive history. Revelation has not occurred in history alone; it has occurred also in the written Scriptures which preserve the divinely initiated meaning of actrevelation. This does not mean that there are two revelations or two processes of revelation—one in history and one in Scripture. Both elements are essential in the one process of revelation. God acted in history; God inspired the prophets to interpret authoritatively the meaning of revelatory history, whether the interpretation was oral or written. We no longer have the living prophetic voice; but we have the living Word of God written, which is the inscripturated prophetic interpretation. Redemptive history is revelatory, but it is not by itself revelation; it is revelation only as the prophetic, or biblical, interpretation discloses the revelatory meaning of redemptive history. We can however say that redemptive history is revelation when we recognize that the Bible is itself the result of God's activity in history and is in fact the crown and consummation of the process of revelation, giving to act-revelation its normative meaning. Thus revelation consists of acts and words, occurrences and interpretation, history and the Bible. The Bible is not merely a witness to revelation in history; it is itself revelation which alone discloses the revelatory meaning of redemptive history.

This explains why propositional truth is an indispensable element in revelation. "God is love." This is a proposition; but it is much more than a proposition.

It is a proposition which, ultimately, can be made and understood only in the light of the historical event of Christ's death, as that event is prophetically interpreted in the Scriptures. Such truth requires the assent of the reader; yet it is obvious that intellectual assent is not enough. Scripture itself affirms this. Personal response is demanded-commitment, trust. It is true that in revelation and as a result of revelation, God gives himself. Revelation has a redemptive purpose. However, this divine self-giving includes knowledge about God as well as knowledge of God. I must know something about God before I can commit myself to him. The continuing human response to the divine revelation includes both mind and heart; in fact, the whole man. It is the business of orthodox Christianity to define and to defend the truth about God and redemption. Apart from assured truth, we have no certain message to proclaim. But it is also the business of orthodox Christianity to propagate revealed truth, to proclaim to sinful men the reality of the self-revealed God and the divinely initiated redemption in Christ, that lost men may be brought back into fellowship with the living God. This is the goal of revelation.



SPEECHLESS

It was in the early days of my ministry, when I was a student minister prior to college days. I was making a pastoral call at a home where a little girl talked incessantly, preventing a conversation between her mother and myself. In self-defense, I playfully said to the child, "Amy, if you will be quiet for five minutes and don't say a word, I will give you five cents. That's a cent a minute, which is pretty good pay."

The little girl became silent and remained so, while I kept my eye on my watch. At the end of the five minutes I gave her the five cents, for which she thanked me. Imagine my great surprise when she looked me seriously in the face and said, "Now, Mr. C., if you will be quiet and won't speak for five minutes I'll give it back to you!" It left both her mother and myself speechless for the moment and I can't recall who spoke next, or what was said.—The Rev. Tom Currant, St. Thomas—Wesley United Church, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

For each report by a minister of the Gospel of an embarrassing moment in his life, Christianity Today will pay \$5 (upon publication). To be acceptable, anecdotes must narrate factually a personal experience, and must be previously unpublished. Contributions should not exceed 250 words, should be typed double-spaced, and bear the writer's name and address. Upon acceptance, such contributions become the property of Christianity Today. Address letters to: Preacher in the Red, Christianity Today, Suite 1014 Washington Building, Washington, D. C.

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The Drive for IMC-WCC Merger

The spirit of ecumenical merger, motive force of 1 contemporary Protestantism, has set as it next goal the integration of the International Missionary Council with the World Council of Churches. Most ecumenical leaders view this step as a logical move in shaping a master framework of organizational unity for Protestant witness, and they are confident that merger will be a fait accompli before the end of the 1960 WCC assembly. Many evangelical leaders, on the other hand, regard the drive for merger with dismay, and as tending to disrupt the harmony of missionary effort in many parts of the world. One fact is certain: while the merger would bring almost half the world witness of Protestant missions within the orbit of the ecumenical movement, it poses fresh problems for mission boards at home and missionary workers abroad.

35,000 PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES

The number of Protestant missionaries in the world today is just under 35,000. Standing at the frontiers of Christian faith against the powers of unbelief and darkness, this missionary force faces modern pressures for alignment unknown in apostolic days. The missionary today is caught in the tension between denominational and interdenominational or superdenominational alignment, which the ecumenical movement proposes to transcend, ostensibly by fulfilling the New Testament conception of the unity of the Church. Over and above this issue, however, hangs the theological tension of the day, posed by the conflict between the liberal and evangelical theology.

STRENGTH OF IMC EFFORT

Since its organization in 1921, the IMC has gathered somewhat less than half the Protestant missionary personnel around the world into its orbit. Since IMC includes most of the older and established mission boards, it doubtless represents half the Protestant missionary effort. Most estimates place its missionary force between 12,000 and 15,000. The bulk of its strength is in missionary personnel from the United States and Great Britain; in fact, 60% of its missionary personnel is accounted for by the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches, U.S.A., and much of the remainder by its British counterpart, the Conference of Missionary Societies. Of the 35,000

Protestant missionaries, 25,000 are from North America, and 43% of these are represented by IMC.

IMC functions as an association of national councils of missions and as an association of councils of national churches, with a shifting emphasis from mission boards to younger churches as the basis of membership. It is rooted in an effort to coordinate the missionary effort of national churches whose rise is an aspect of ecumenical Christianity in the twentieth century.

At first IMC was promoted as a non-theological agency concerned only with missionary cooperation and efficiency. Its early efforts were carried on under the theme of the missionary proclamation of the gospel. Many evangelical missionaries cooperated with the understanding that its existence was wholly independent of ecumenical interests. Although the IMC program was increasingly represented as a means of fulfilling Christ's prayer for the unity of the Churchthe favorite theme of all ecumenical ventures—evangelical leaders who were apprehensive about this trend understood ecumenical pronouncements before and after the 1955 Evanston Assembly to mean that no plan was on foot to integrate IMC and the WCC.

The fact is, however, that IMC and WCC had already been brought into an official consitutional relationship at the Amsterdam assembly in 1950. IMC leaders, replying to evangelical protests that they were misled by ambiguous statements at Evanston, stress that the question in debate was not whether to merge, but when to merge, and that 1955 was not the propitious time. The announcement was not "we have resolved not to integrate," but rather, "we have not resolved to integrate."

OTHER MISSION AGENCIES

Alongside IMC, which accounts for less than half of the Protestant missionary personnel, exist other missionary agencies organized on a specifically theological basis, both denominational and interdenominational. Organized in 1917 as an association of non-denominational faith mission boards, Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association now represents 6,000 missionaries. Evangelical Foreign Mission Association, an association of mission boards formed in 1945, reports 4,600 missionaries in direct membership. Doubtless these figures reflect some measure of overlap. But

since EFMA represents an additional 1,000 missionaries not in direct membership but outside IFMA, these organizations account for more than 10,000 missionaries.

Both IFMA and EFMA are fundamentalist or evangelical in theology. IFMA excludes denominational and holiness groups, while EFMA includes both. In addition to its framework of spiritual fellowship, EFMA emphasizes its service features (expediting passports, protesting infractions of religious liberty, etc.).

Beside these movements exist denominational groups going their own way and represented by none of the larger organizations. For example, there are 1,000 Southern Baptist missionaries and almost 300 Lutheran (Missouri Synod) missionaries outside the orbit of IMC, IFMA and EFMA.

THE SHIFT IN IMC EMPHASIS

When local and national councils of churches were organized in foreign lands by the ecumenical movement, many areas boasted a predominance of evangelical missionaries. In many instances these missionaries did not wish to be excluded from a voice in organized Protestantism. Since IMC was projected as a noncreedal agency assisting established missions in doing their job, these evangelicals did not resist its advances, but enlisted in the local IMC councils.

In recent years, evangelical opinion has cooled toward IMC, primarily for two reasons. Little by little IMC has moved into the realm of theological issues. The question of the nature of the Church has been constantly raised by the younger churches in relation to their mission boards, and this in turn has renewed the issues of liberalism, neo-supernaturalism, and evangelicalism. Moreover, while IMC has not directly implemented the WCC program, the agency has doubtless done much indirect footwork for WCC since the Amsterdam assembly.

THE BIG MERGER LOOMS

These issues have now come into major focus with the announcement that merger of IMC and the WCC is under active consideration. Whereas a few years ago the imminence of merger was scouted, the current emphasis is that the WCC in reality is a product of the IMC as the symbol of ecumenical missionary concern. The IMC claims that its 1921 beginnings were really sparked by the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. Whereas the ecumenical movement has centered interest in the concerns of Faith and Order, and Life and Work, it is now proposed to center its outreach in the missionary movement.

The next step toward merger is scheduled next December when the IMC assembly at Ghana, on the African Gold Coast, will vote on a draft plan of integration. If approval is ratified by IMC constituent councils, the plan will come before the 1960 assembly of the WCC.

DENOMINATIONAL QUESTIONS

Structural and theological aspects of the proposed merger are causing concern to leaders in some denominational mission boards.

On the structural side the questions are numerous. The IMC has been and is, as its name implies, an organization strictly devoted to the business of missions. Those who compose it are, for the most part, persons who are engaged in the missionary task. Thus IMC is of the nature of a "trades association" in which those who are charged with a specialized responsibility meet for consultation and counsel concerning matters to which they hold a direct administrative relationship. The WCC, on the other hand, is quite different in structure. It is, as the name suggests, a council of churches. Representatives from various ecclesiastical bodies to the WCC are not persons who necessarily have any relationship to their own denominational program of missions. For example, of the 12 representatives of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in the WCC, not one has any administrative connection with its Foreign Mission Board or with its program of work overseas. The framers of the plan of integration have undoubtedly seen this difficulty and have sought to meet it by proposing that there be set up within the WCC a Commission on World Missions and Evangelism, approximately two-thirds of whose membership will be drawn from councils now affiliated with the IMC. However, this Commission would have no final authority within the Council, but would submit its report and make recommendation to the Assembly and the Central Committee.

Some denominational spokesmen also fear that all this machinery of organization, with the interposition of additional steps before any action can be regarded as authorized, will have the effect of retarding the functions and processes that the organization is designed to serve. The unwieldiness of ever larger structures involves enormous overhead costs, time waste and delay, and inefficiency that one critic declares "would bankrupt any organization except one supported by charity."

FEAR GROWTH OF POWER

Others warn that democratic liberties characteristic of Protestantism will be in serious danger under this system of concentrated power. While the new organization is projected as "consultative, not controlling," designed to serve the purposes of reference and counsel, and without compromising the independence and autonomy of constituent bodies (the draft plan of merger asserts that "the Commission has no mandatory authority over any of the affiliated or associated councils in its membership"), they regard this as unconvincing. Mandatory power there may not be; but the power of pressure, persuasion, preponderance, publicity and propaganda is tremendous. A kind of regimentation can be brought about which is absolute in authority. Experience clearly shows, they argue, that organizations of this sort, begun for the purpose of mutual consultation and sharing, soon develop administrative powers.

By way of example, such observers note that since the Foreign Missions Conference was superseded by the organization of the National Council in 1950 with its Division of Foreign Missions, there has been a gradual change with respect to function. The elements of reference, counsel and consultation are still there, but there is a definite development in the direction of making the Division of Foreign Missions and its Executive Board increasingly administrative and directive. Various units of the Division, such as the Africa Committee, the Far Eastern Committee and the Latin-America Committee, are setting up programs and projects administered centrally from New York, the boards participating by contributing their share to the special budgets required for these enterprises and by their representation on the controlling committees. There develops, through this process, a sort of collective administration of rapidly increasing programs of work in these several areas. Would it not be too much to expect, observers ask, that the same thing would not happen if the merger takes place between the IMC and the

Whatever the structural problems, the theological aspect is viewed by some denominational spokesmen as the real heart of the difficulty. Theologically speaking, the WCC is a disappointment to many who stand for a vigorous Christian testimony in the world. They feel that the Council, purporting to represent the major stream of Christian life, thought and action in the world, ought to have a more forthright testimony in faith and doctrine. What kind of mission will be fostered and promoted by a unity that seems to be interested primarily in organizational oneness, they ask, rather than in a united proclamation of a forthright full-rounded gospel that will be honoring to Christ?

EVANGELICAL CONCERN

The evangelical missionary enterprise has been thrown into new tensions over ecumenical issues through the IMC-WCC merger maneuver. Evangelical missionaries enlisted in the IMC on the basis of its non-creedal framework are now threatening to detach themselves from local missionary councils on foreign fields unless those councils detach themselves from IMC in view

of the proposed merger with WCC. The ecumenical drive for merger, it is protested, while ostensibly in the name of the unity of the Church, is actually disruptive, since it is now threatening and curtailing the range of missionary cooperation, in and through the identification of the broad missionary interest with an objectionably abbreviated theological base as represented by the WCC.

Congo Protestant Council, one of the oldest members of IMC and also one of the most vigorous councils in Africa, has threatened to withdraw from IMC because of the provocative theological issue if the merger with WCC is consummated. The Norwegian Missionary Society has also given indications of withdrawal on the ground that its workers would not be at home within the new alignment.

Meanwhile, tensions between evangelical forces and the IMC are rising. Some missionary leaders resent increasing IMC pressures in behalf of the WCC aimed to secure evangelical continuance within the merger framework. IMC spokesmen have propagandized to preserve the status quo on foreign fields while home constituencies are pressuring missionary boards for theological reasons to pull their missionaries out of foreign councils that persist in affiliation with IMC. In French Indo-China, evangelical leaders complain, IMC advocates have sought to influence local churches contrary to the principles of their governing mission boards in America. EFMA has already set aside a day during its Winona Lake conference, October 1-4, when its executive committee will discuss problems related to the drive for merger.

Ecumenical spokesmen discount evangelical fears that the proposed merger will neutralize the missionary effort through a blurring of theological distinctives. But evangelical mission leaders point to the Church of South India, arguing that it was shaped according to the lowest common denominator theologically on the ecumenical pattern and then defected from a Bible-centered ministry.

PEACE OF THE CHURCHES

In recent decades evangelical leaders have been exasperated frequently because they have been dismissed as uncooperative or divisive simply because they have not enlisted in ecumenical organizations and ventures. Many of them point to the implications of the IMC-WCC merger as an evidence that ecumenical forces are more interested in massively organized Protestantism than in harmony of the Protestant witness. What genuine devotion to the unity of Christian missions, they ask, dictates an unyielding drive for massive mergers that are provocative of tensions in evangelical missionary effort and disruptive of the harmony of established church enterprises?

Evangelical spokesmen point especially to the Congo, where the crisis posed by the merger possibility affects 54 mission boards. Of these, 46 are in the Congo Protestant Council, which is older than IMC, of which it is now an affiliate. Some of the largest of these boards are also in EFMA and IFMA, but all have cooperated and contributed to the Council within the IMC as a non-theological agency. The vast majority of these boards want no affiliation with the WCC for theological reasons, and their leaders have given advance warning that an IMC-WCC merger will split the Congo Protestant Council.

The disruptive consequences of the IMC-WCC drive for merger, some evangelical leaders argue, gives a hollow center to ecumenical attempts to impute to evangelical Christianity blame for the disunity of Protestant witness.

As pressures increase for the ecumenical movement's absorption of the missionary enterprise, reaction will also increase on the part of those lacking enthusiasm for the ecumenical effort in its present theological outlines. The present Protestant missionary situation is therefore not bright with the promise of harmony.

IS MERGER ASSURED?

Some Protestant leaders doubt, however, that the IMC-WCC merger is certain of achievement in 1960, though they regard it as inevitable. Dr. Norman Goodall, secretary of the Joint Committee of the WCC and

IMC, concedes some reservations have been voiced both within IMC and WCC to the present formulation. Moreover, the IMC constitution makes possible the defeat of the merger plan, once it is commended to the member councils in December at the Ghana assembly, by the opposition vote of but six of those councils during the subsequent two-year interval.

Already there are indications that the Congo and the Norwegian councils will oppose. Moreover, opposition to the merger has also been voiced by the Orthodox Church (both Greek and Russian), for reasons quite different from evangelical opposition. The complaint of the Orthodox Church is that the merger would imply WCC approval of the Protestant Reformation missionary witness to which the Orthodox Church is opposed in its own geographical sphere as objectionable proselyting. (Some ecumenical leaders think the Orthodox opposition will help to crystallize evangelical enthusiasm, while some evangelical leaders reply that the inclusion of the Orthodox Church within the ecumenical framework only serves to dramatize its objectionable theological base.)

Although Dr. Goodall concedes that the IMC assembly "could turn down" the merger plan as too divisive, he thinks the general proposal is more likely to receive a majority vote at Ghana, and that its fate will be commended to the constituent councils. In the event of their approval, the merger will be consummated at the 1960 WCC assembly.

Ecumenism and the Lord's Table

R. J. RUSHDOONY

With the current interest in ecumenism and church union, there is a growing emphasis on the Lord's table and a revival of interest in liturgics. Much of this latter interest has been properly criticized as romantic, as concerned unduly with rubrics, chants, stained glass, choral and congregational responses, clerical garb and the like, and as irrelevant. The Lord's Supper began as a simple meal in an upper room, and,

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in the early church, was closer to the church potluck supper than to the modern observance. On the other hand, it must be clearly understood that we are not tied to the original form of the Lord's Supper, in which case an upper room would be required, but to the essential form and content, as given in I Corinthians 11:18-34. Concerning the basic form, the words of institution, there is general agreement.

But what then is the essential content of the Lord's Supper? Here, for many persons, the old term "communion" is most expressive. It is the Christian bond of peace and unity, the outward token of an inward and outward communion in and with Christ. As such, the Lord's Supper has become the symbol of the current

aspirations for ecumenity. Christ's Church, sorely divided into many fragments and splinters, must be again united so that, with an effective and united voice, she may witness to a troubled world. In terms of such thinking, every service of communion becomes an indictment of the Church for continuing in disunion.

The fallacy of such thinking, however, is that it makes central to the Lord's table the human communion of many believers, the totality of human strength as essential to witness, and the centrality of unity to Christian faith and life. It inevitably obscures the essential meaning of the sacrament, the atonement and redemption effected for believers by Jesus Christ, their continuing preservation, sanctification and unity in and with him. That unity does have an important part in this picture is obvious. But to emphasize it unduly is to distort the entire picture, if not to destroy it. In ecumenical thinking, incredible latitude is permitted with regard to the doctrinal aspects; these need not be taken literally, but unity must be taken literally. Thus the ecumenical approach allows a latitudinarian interpretation of the deity of Christ, of his atonement, of security, sanctification, and other doctrines, but insists on a literal approach to unity. The opponents of unity insist on a literal subscription to dogmatic statements but insist on a spiritualizing and latitudinarian interpretation of unity.

TRUTH AND UNITY

Obviously, therefore, the concept of unity needs exallination. It must be first of all noted that the modern ecumenical movement has no relationship to the councils of the early Church. There the emphasis was on truth above unity, and unity only on the grounds of truth. The enduring value of these councils, despite many disorders as well as doctrinal variations, consisted in their emphasis on truth as the only valid ground for union. This emphasis, however, gave way gradually to the Roman Catholic emphasis, which, from the Protestant point of view, is on unity above truth. The differences preceding the Vatican Council were subordinated to the principle of unity; the long history of theological differences, for example, between Dominicans and Franciscans, shows also their subordination to the opinion made dogmatically binding. To the Protestant, truth and unity have a transcendent reconciliation in Christ; to the Roman Catholic, believing in Christ's continuing incarnation in the church and the apostolic authority of the See of Peter, truth and unity have an immanent reconciliation in the pope; and hence papal infallibility is not an exotic but natural development of this immanence. Since the principle of unity is present in the person of the Roman pontiff, the principle of unity cannot exist apart from him or be reserved to the church and its schools. Thus devout Roman

Catholics can submit to doctrinal pronouncements previously unacceptable to them because doctrinal pronouncements "concerning faith or morals to be held by the Universal Church" are truly and authoritatively defined by the Roman pontiff alone "and not by virtue of the consent of the Church" (Vatican Council). To the evangelical Protestant, truth and unity are perfectly reconciled in Christ only, not immanently in any social order or church. The modern ecumenical emphasis is analogous to Rome in that unity is the means to truth and the very ground of truth. The Roman concept of unity is imposed from above. The modern Protestant ecumenical movement differs from the Roman approach only in seeking unity more democratically. It agrees with Rome in emphasizing peace and unity as more important than truth and as the real ground of truth in

UNITY DOES NOT STAND ALONE

In terms of such thinking, Athanasius, Luther, and Calvin were clearly wrong in insisting that truth is more important than peace and unity. They were wrong then in believing that Christians must be exposed to the turbulent and demanding claims of truth and in insisting, through the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, that all Christians, and all men, must be brought face to face with the truth in Jesus Christ, and with the whole counsel of God in his Word, that unity might grow out of a priesthood grounded and established in truth.

Here it must be pointed out that the very conception of truth and unity as well as truth versus unity is in a very important measure defective. First of all, it must be recognized that by its very nature truth is divisive. It compels a demarcation and a definition, a separation from error and evil. Truth must therefore always be underrated and obscured if a blanket unity is to be furthered. Second, unity in itself is no more a virtue than is sincerity. The sincerity of Hitler and the unity of the German people under him constituted no moral value or gain. Sincerity and unity possess moral validity only as they are attached to persons and causes having moral validity. If unity is sought on grounds which undervalue truth, then unity becomes to that same degree reprehensible. Third, it must be recognized, however, that truth in itself can be barren, if, indeed, it is possible for truth to so exist. A very important question must here be raised: can truth exist without grace? For a Christian, such a thing is inconceivable: truth and grace are different aspects of one revelation. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Jesus Christ is the revelation of God's truth and grace. Truth cannot exist without grace, and grace cannot exist apart from truth. Thus, the doctrinaire and belligerent attitude of some opponents of ecumenity is

grounded neither in grace nor in truth but in a partisan spirit which is as defective as the barren insistence on union. The truly ecumenical insistence will not be on peace and unity but on truth and grace, and the only effective opposition to the defective ecumenity of our era is one which presents truth and grace. Fourth, it must be stated that there is a difference between unity and union. Union can exist without unity, and unity without union. Ecumenical thinking too often aims at union rather than unity, at an outward marriage, leading to a Protestant Rome, rather than a true marriage of minds and spirits. All such attempts only compound weaknesses and troubles and render sick churches more sick. On the other hand, it is not enough to emphasize unity without union. Where true unity exists, is there no obligation to union? Is it not indeed a form of irresponsibility to emphasize our unity and berate union?

EVANGELICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Fifth, it is obvious that many churches today are far more interested in union than in unity. One of the ironic notes today is the growing destruction by ecumenity of its own parents. More of the modern ecumenical movement stems from various evangelical movements of the past century than is commonly recognized. Moody's revivals, for example, cut across denominational lines and did more to foster interchurch relations than is generally conceded. Revivalism, with its "common denominator theology," did much to correlate the theologies of the various churches. The Christian Endeavor movement, for many decades shaping the lives of the potential leaders of various denominations, trained them into a common denominator Christianity, albeit a conservative one, and emphasized interchurch unity. These movements and others like them were important in their major impact on American life in extending the frontiers of faith and life; they were also important in leveling the specifically Calvinist, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, and other specifically theological and ecclesiological emphases in favor of a skeletal Christianity. As such they were a major ecumenical factor, whatever our opinion of their value.

But modern ecumenical leaders are at one and the same time active in promoting specifically denominational youth programs, church revival, and evangelism endeavors. They insist on union rather than unity, and on church loyalty rather than basic and fundamental doctrines. Clearly, church loyalty is a needed emphasis in the face of so much atomistic and individualistic thinking with regard to the Christian life. Without it, the church cannot be a church. But church loyalty is a dangerous concept unless subordinated to truth and grace, unless it is held in recognition of the freedom of

the Christian believer and is truly a part of our obedience to the triune God. The Church and its leaders are never free of sin and every trifle cannot be made an occasion for revolt, but neither can the Church require obedience where it seeks to be the lawgiver as against God in his Word. Jesus Christ is King of the Church and its only lawgiver, and none other can bind the consciences of men. The Church can bind and loose only ministerially, not legislatively; only in Christ, not in its own authority; and loyalty must be ministerially, not legislatively, required.

MEANING OF LORD'S TABLE

Ecumenity, and the opposition to ecumenity, needs to be recalled to the true meaning of the Lord's table. which indeed is the true bond of our unity and peace in Christ. According to Paul, those who failed to discern the Lord's body (I Cor. 11:29) were those who failed, first, to understand the nature of the sacrament. the meaning of the death, resurrection, atonement, sanctifying and preserving work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, they revealed their lack of knowledge of truth by their lack of grace and order in their supper observances, their gluttony and drunkenness, their disunity and contempt of their brothers, and their selfsatisfaction with their worship. They thus failed to discern the Lord's body in the supper, that is, in its meaning, and failed to discern the Lord's body in his Church. Today, in both the proponents and opponents of ecumenity there is a similar failure. It may again be said of this generation, both Christians and churches, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (I Cor. 11:30). The penalty for failure to discern the Lord's body is still judgment (I Cor. 11:29).

Alternatives

Not with mere stuttering repetition
Or useless aspirations dumbly spun
From wheels forever whirled on fitful winds
Over bleak gullies washed by turbid streams;
Nor egocentric flailing of dull flesh
Practised in the cloistered cell by night,
With wielded scourge and trickling blood and grief,
For extrication of essential guilt;
Nor bruised knees upward groping on the steep
Cross-studded sacramental stairs nor tearGroined cheeks to squatting idols bowed, with hope
From bloodless stone to gather certitude:
Neither these por other agonies of heart

Neither these nor other agonies of heart
Preclude the grace that caused the veil to part.

JOHN JAMIESON

Lost River of Paradise

J. MARCELLUS KIK

The second chapter of Genesis presents a mystery that has puzzled many through the ages—the mystery of a lost river. Scholars have endeavored to trace the river that flowed out of Paradise but so far only several of its branches have been identified. Seemingly the River of Eden has completely disappeared. The account as given in Genesis 2:10-14:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bedellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

Scholars have conjectured that the four branches of the lost river are: the Indus, the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates. These four great rivers give us some idea of the extent of the lost River of Paradise. The magnificent trees, the fragrant plants, the beautiful flowers of the Garden of Eden were watered by this river. The division into four branches indicated that the world surrounding Eden was to be watered as the numeral four is often used as a symbol for the earth. Thus we know that God intended the blessings of Paradise to prevail throughout the world. The entire earth, under the providence and blessing of God, was to be like the garden of Eden.

If the Indus, the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates were branches of the River of Paradise, then they pose a difficult problem of relating them to a common source, as a glance at a map will show that they are somewhat disjointed. This very disjointure, however, points graphically to the sad fact that Paradise itself is lost.

ANOTHER RIVER

Paradise and its river were lost through the fall of man. The Indus, the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates are like four huge signposts that have been turned and confused by the sin of man. Reading these signposts, one can only become convinced that the former source, the River of Paradise, has been lost.

Turning away from these confused signposts, we turn for direction to a guidebook which so often dis-

closes that which has been lost. The Bible is that guidebook; within its pages we hear the rippling sound of a quiet, soft-flowing river. Its sound comes to our ears in Psalm 46:

There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

Within the boundary of the Psalm the river appears so small. Yet the river is set in contrast to the roar and restlessness of the mighty sea. The sea symbolizes the unbelieving world. The Bible informs us that "the wicked are like the troubled sea." The wicked multitude is kept in constant motion by pride, ambition, greed and lust. Like the restless sea they are never at rest with themselves or with others. The sea ever rages and seeks to destroy. In opposition to this roaring, restless, raging sea is set the quiet, soft-flowing river with its peaceful streams. Strange as it may seem this river conquers the mighty, restless sea. Surely this river with its streams must be the lost River of Paradise.

A HEALING STREAM

The nature of this river and its healing streams is revealed in chapter 47 of the prophecy of Ezekiel:

And, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward . . . Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea . . . And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed: and everything shall live whither the river cometh.

The prophet Ezekiel has just seen a vision of a glorious temple. Now he beholds a river whose waters issued from under the threshold of the temple. The river flowed into the east country, into the desert, and finally into the sea. Significantly, the river entered into the Dead Sea. No fish or any form of animal life can exist within the salty water of the Dead Sea. But behold! When the river from the temple enters into the Dead Sea, "it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish."

The river that flows from the temple has such restorative energy that even the Dead Sea—symbol of God's curse against sin—is filled with a multitude of fish. May we hint of the fulfillment of this vision by recalling the voice of one who cried to a group of fishermen, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men"? He also directed his disciples, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They cast the net and were not able to draw it for the multitude of fish. Through the restorative powers of the River of Paradise children of God would appear in nations that previously had been under the curse of God.

Ezekiel also relates how the river affected the desert places, "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed" (Ezek. 47:12). The ripple of the same river is heard in Jeremiah 17 and Psalm 1 where we read that those who are planted by that river bring forth their fruit in their season and their leaf shall not wither. May we hint at the fulfillment of this part of the vision by recalling the statement of him who said, "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." The disciples of Christ are indeed planted by the River of Paradise and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.

A RIVER OF LIFE

We would love to dwell wherever we hear the sound of the rippling of this river in Scripture; but we pass on to the very last chapter of the Bible where the river reappears. (Oh those blind leaders of the blind who deny the unity and inspiration of the Scriptures! Could mere man keep this river flowing through the books of the prophets and apostles during the course of centuries? What fools men be who deny the divine authorship of the Book of books!) In words reminiscent of Ezekiel's vision, the river appears in verses 1 and 2 of Revelation 22:

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The water of this river is pure, living, clear, fresh and wholesome. Unlike the salt water of the restless sea or the stale stagnant water of broken cisterns, this water possesses life-giving power. As the river flows desert places are changed into gardens of Eden.

The river finds its source in the throne of God and of the Lamb. All life comes from God the Father, in God the Son, through God the Holy Spirit. The Lamb is specifically mentioned because all life is bestowed by

virtue of his atoning sacrifice on Calvary's cross. Those who search for living water outside of Christ, search in vain.

But let us draw even closer to this life-giving river. In the seventh chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks these thrilling words:

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

The River of Paradise is Jesus Christ. It consists of the life of Christ conveyed by the Holy Spirit to believing and thirsting souls. They who drink of the water of this river are quickened and made alive forever more. Their souls resemble a watered garden. Where desert plants of uncleanness, idolatry, hatred, wrath, strife, drunkenness and deceit once thrived, there now appear fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. The barren soul becomes a garden of Eden watered by the River of Paradise, Christ Jesus.

EACH ONE A BRANCH

Each individual soul becomes a branch of living water, reaching out to barren souls. The four branches of Eden become a multitude of streams flowing to the four corners of the earth. The River of Paradise entered into the Church of the New Testament on the day of Pentecost. The preaching of Christ by Peter was the first bursting forth of these waters from the temple. Three thousand souls were quickened and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. From Jerusalem the river and its streams flowed into Judea, Samaria, Syria, Asia, Greece, Italy, Germany, France, Holland, England, America, China, Africa, India and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

Each believer by the indwelling Spirit becomes a branch of the River of Paradise and conveys refreshing and healing waters to thirsty souls in desert places.

The River of Paradise which first appeared in the second chapter of Genesis has been found. In the midst of the roaring and raging of the restless sea, the ripple of this gentle, quiet, soft-flowing river is scarcely heard. Yet its healing waters continue to flow, causing the fragrant flowers of love, peace and joy to appear—love that abides, peace that remains throughout eternity, joy that never departs. The river regains Paradise for the soul.

He who is the River of Paradise has promised, "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses."

THE BIBLE: Book of the Month

THE PSALMS

IN TIMES LIKE THESE we need to turn ourselves frequently to the Psalms. In them there is an intoxication with "the world above the world," an acknowledgment of God at every step, a quest of the soul for the living God. In this questing, too, there is always the element of wonder; stretched out and yearning, the souls of the psalmists never fully comprehend Yahweh's genius in creation nor his loving kindness toward men who sink in "deep mire, where there is no standing" (Psalm 69:2).

Moreover, there are in the Psalter taproots for growing tall, beauteous soulssouls that, unlike cut flowers, will bloom steadily and lustily through this life into the next. And if our newest weapons give us the jitters, the Psalms will give us balm and poise.

Kings and peasants, sages and saints, the tormented and the confident-they all speak out in these diaries of the heart. In their cries in the night and their hallelujahs at noonday they speak with peculiar relevance to believers in our time.

PIETY OF THE PSALMS

Not a system of reasoned ideas; not what the Greeks would have given us. "The pearls here all lie loose and unstrung . . . says John Paterson (The Praises of Israel, p. 24). Paterson also suggests: "Joy here is too abounding and sorrow is too passionate to be compressed within the moulds of a logical system" (ibid. p.

What we have in the Psalter is a distilled piety. "In it beats the very heart of the Old Testament and of all spiritual religion" (W. T. Davidson, The Praises of Israel, p. 1). "What the heart is in man, that the Psalter is in the Bible" (Joh. Arnd; see Delitzsch's Biblical Commentary on the Psalms, 1894, I, p. xvii). To use Paterson again, he says: "The Psalter finds us in the deepest parts of our being, and those songs speak a universal language to the heart of all mankind" (op. cit. p. 4).

Harold A. Bosley suggests something similar. Of this heart history he writes, "It is composed of the deepest, truest, most luminous insights we have into the universal and permanently important experiences of the human spirit" (Sermons on the Psalms, p. 10). He also speaks of the Psalter as ". . . one of our longest, steadiest, deepest looks into the

depths of life" (ibid., p. 1). That is what John Calvin was referring to when he called these bits of glory written out "An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul" (Commentary on the Psalms, I, Preface,

Doubts, fears, penitence, confidence, thanks, praise-these all figure in this heart literature. And our souls run together with the souls of the writers of the Psalms. Their joys are ours, and their distresses; their confidence, and their moans of contrition. Pens dipped in divine inspiration point right at us. We go forward for prayer in Psalm 51, water our couches with tears in Psalm 6, recount our blessings in Psalm 103, pant after God as does a thirsty hart after the water brooks in Psalm 42, pillow our heads in Psalm 23.

ORIGIN OF THE PSALTER

Many of us would agree with W. E. Barnes that "for the Psalms questions of date and historical occasion are relatively unimportant (The Psalms, I, p. viii). The date and occasion of Daniel, for example, are far more important than they are for a given Psalm or series of Psalms. Yet it is of consequence who wrote the Psalms, when, and why.

Some men such as Duhm have tried to tell us that most of them originated in the Maccabean age. Most scholars, such as Gunkel, Oesterley, Paterson, and Snaith date them, in general, considerably earlier. The tendency during the last three decades or so is toward earlier dating. It is probably not without bearing that in all printed editions of the Hebrew Bible the Psalms are the first book among the "Writings," for there seems to have been an attempt to arrange the books chronologically within each of the three divisions of the Jewish canon. Moreover, in the Hebrew manuscripts it never appears later than second among the Writ-

In the Hebrew the inscription le-David appears above 73 of the Psalms. It is rendered "A Psalm of David" in the AV and RV. (In the Septuagint, besides these 73 instances of the Davidic title, there are 15 others.) Most scholars would agree that the Hebrew could be rendered "A Psalm to (or for) David," or even "after the manner of David" (Barnes, op. cit., p. xxiii). Paterson suggests "after the style of David" (op cit. p. 19).

This much is certain: (1) that the Hebrew scribes quite early understood the le-David as referring to actual authorship, since they frequently added to those psalm headings references to incidents in David's life which occasioned the songs; and (2) that the le-David headings are quite early since they appear in the oldest extant texts of the Septuagint.

Some critics say that David of the Psalm inscriptions is not the king David of the historical books (see excellent response to this in Barnes, op. cit., pp. xxv ff). Yet many suggest that the Psalms reflect David's life as given in those books (cf. Alexander Maclaren, The Life of David as Reflected in His Psalms, re-

printed 1955).

Quite certainly the Septuagint is incorrect in ascribing 88 Psalms to David. Take, for example, Psalm 137, one of its 15 extra Davidic Psalms. That Psalm is surely the song of a subjected Hebrew in exile. Moreover, most would question a number of the 73 Davidic titles in the Hebrew, understanding that the later "title-makers" were not inspired, as were the psalm writers themselves. Alexander Maclaren suggests that 45 Psalms are quite certainly from David (ibid., p. 11).

Whether a given Psalm originated within the soul of David, Moses, Solomon or someone else, Christians and Jews alike agree that "the words of the Psalter are alive with the awareness of an Other" (E. Leslie, The Psalms, p. 18).

STRUCTURE OF THE PSALMS

We English readers often expect rhyme and meter in our poetry. But not all peoples have this feature in their poetic literature. The Anglo-Saxons, for example, looked for alliterated line beginnings instead of rhymed endings; this is another form of regularity, and regularity is what most distinguishes poetry from prose. Hebrew poetry often has a regularity of ideas in what we call its parallelisms-synonymous as in Psalms 15:1 and 67:3, antithetical as in Psalm 1:6, and in its stair-step arrangement as in Psalms 29:1-2 and 24:7-10. Also, frequent use is made of repetition; in Psalm 136 each of its 26 verses contains the refrain, "for his mercy endureth forever." More important, there are those passionate, luminous words and expressions found in all poetic literature. Most scholars would agree with W. E. Barnes that the Hebrews had ". . . a genius for religious poetry" (op. cit., I, p. vii). While some consider the threshold Psalm to be a prose introduction to the Psalter, the Hebrew genius is at work at least from Psalm 2, through those paeans of praise

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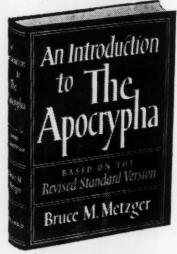
in Psalm 150 with its ten-fold "halle-lujah" (praise ye the Lord) with which the Psalter is closed and which constitutes a fitting doxology to the whole. All of these Psalms together are called "Praises" in the Hebrew Bible. They were called "Psalms" in the Septuagint, and we have been influenced by that early Greek version here as on many other points.

In his Old Testament Essays (1927) pp. 118-142, Hermann Gunkel suggested that there are four main classes of Psalms: National hymns of praise, private hymns of thanksgiving, national hymns of sorrow and private hymns of sorrow. Some were thought of as mixed types. Bosley (op. cit., p. 10) gives a four-type summary also, but of a different sort. To him the types are penitence, hate, adoration and simple faith.

Regarding the Psalms of "hate," we may surely understand that the enemies in some of them are nations, and that when they are individuals they are the psalmists' enemies because they are God's. Robert F. Pheiffer supposes that the "righteous" are often the Pharisees, and the "sinners" the Sadducees (Introduction to the Old Testament, 1948, p. 620). In any case, the psalmists lived in times when many thought it right to hate their enemies. Jesus showed that when he said. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy" (Matthew 5:43). Not until Jesus came was that principle radically repudiated.

According to the Midrash on the Psalms, an ancient Jewish commentary, Moses gave the Israelites the five books of the Law, and to correspond to them David gave them the Psalms in five books. Although no one would now believe that David compiled the five books of the 150 psalms now in our Psalter, some believe there is a correspondence between the Law and the Psalms. Harry A. Ironside (Psalms, p. 406) believed that the dominant subject of each of the five books of the Pentateuch is duplicated in each of the five books in the Psalter. Norman Snaith argues more convincingly for a correspondence between them (Hymns of the Temple, pp. 18 ff). It might well be that just as a portion of the Law was read each Sabbath, with something from the Prophets, so a Psalm was read. The reading of Psalm One, in which the blessed man meditates on the Law day and night, would be most fitting on the day, each three years, when a new beginning was made in the public reading of the Law. It is (Cont'd on page 31)

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OBERLIN: UNITY AND MISSION

In a world tottering before powers contrived to divide, one Power alone qualifies to unite men for time and eternity. Transcending all differences of race, of nationality and of social status is the oneness men may find in Jesus Christ.

Yet we languish in a divided Christendom. The re-

ligious disunity of the West, the crumbling of visible unity of Christian faith and order, are only too apparent. In fact, today's Christian community often lacks a vibrant sense of common Christian heritage, of historical continuity bridging from New Testament times to the

present.

During the last 100 years Christian churches, through their missionary effort, for the first time became a world-wide phenomenon. Yet confrontation by hostile world powers, especially of totalitarianism and secularism, sharpened the awareness of a very real Christian disunity. After 2000 years, Christian leaders were driven to ask: Is there hope that the visible churches can surmount their divisions? May it not be that some ecclesiastical conflicts stem from human perversity, that some divisions reflect secondary concerns?

And so the great drive for unity has gained momentum, storming the arguments in favor of diversity. May not diversity stem from human finiteness as well as from sinful rebellion? May not a democratic element in church life best guard a universal Church from usurping Christ's lordship? (See Luther on the papacy for comments still relevant to a monolithic church.) Such questions became unpopular in the desperate concentration upon unity. For a generation Christian disunity has been diagnosed as evidence of institutional pride and sin, and of deficiency in nourishing ecclesiastical life with the unifying dynamic of the Holy Spirit. While emphasis has fallen, as well it may, on the dangers of a divided Church, the fact that churches can be united in quite bizarre patterns and by quite unworthy motives has been minimized.

The World Council of Churches has weighted the contemporary Christian balances with its uneasiness over disunity, thereby providing a powerful new incentive for unity. While three decades of prayer and effort, of study and organization, have shaped its convictions, yet agreement is still lacking on the meaning of ecumenical unity as it concerns the churches. Previously, the nature of church unity had not been a main theme for the World Council nor even an explicit subsidiary theme of an ecumenical session. This month in Oberlin,

however, the North American Conference on Faith and

Order addressed itself specifically to this dilemma.

Two controlling definitions of ecumenics have emerged from ecumenical discussion and debate. The one is structural: herein ecumenics is a basic unity of faith and/or order, involving the churches in a search for a common faith or a common framework for ecumenical effort. This endeavor for agreement in faith and order has proved increasingly frustrating and exasperating. Insisting that unity of the churches involves some tangible demonstration in their role as churches, leaders asked: What sort of visible unity does God will for his Church? Among the various formulas for the "organized body of Christ," the following have been suggested, sometimes as successive stages: (1) mutual recognition (in which cooperation replaces competition between churches); (2) cooperative action through councils of churches on local and national levels; (3) church mergers in view of a sense of unity at the level of faith and order on the part of ministry and members; (4) organic or corporate unity in one communion or church that functions as a body with a single life and history in space and time. Would this last stage result in recombining existing churches with a high measure of visible centralized control and government? As opponents often say of ecumenical insistence that unity requires organization visibly manifested at the local level, would it carry outlines of a monolithic organized super-church? At Oberlin, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft dismissed the notion of a monolithic super-church as the only alternative to disunity. But neither Dr. Visser 't Hooft nor anyone else at the conference produced any alternative that actually delineates the WCC's normative concept of unity between monolithic uniformity and competitive pluralism.

Since discussions of unity frequently had reduced to a running apologia for the doctrines of member groups, or for hospitable schemes of church union and organization, and had achieved no clear agreement on the lineaments of ecumenical unity, the North American Conference longed for a promising alternative of motivation. Instead of a structural definition, therefore, it ventured a second definition of ecumenics, namely the dynamic: herein unity comes through the Church's mission, rather than from a common faith or a common order or structure. Thus ecumenics is the Church universal expressing the saviourhood and lordship of Christ by its missionary concern. Proponents of this approach ask: For what purpose is the One Great Church fashioned? One observer, fearful of a super-church as the end-all of ecumenical activity, asked: "What shall it profit the Church if she gain the whole oikumene and lose her witness?"

This shift of emphasis to purpose or mission as the basis of unity by the North American Conference gave a new and strategic direction to faith and order study. Leaders had observed that world conferences often generalize issues; that a special obligation to elaborate unity rests upon the United States and Canada, since their churches speak much the same language, members freely intermingle and intermarry, and congregational life reflects the special influence of democratic forces. Other leaders noted the absence of an ecumenical temper on the local level; the emergence of a powerful evangelistic dynamism from outside the organized ecumenical movement; the frustrated effort to find ecumenical unanimity on the level of faith and order. The new sense of dynamic purpose encourages the WCC merger with the International Missionary Council as the next great organization goal (cf. "The Drive for IMC-WCC Merger" in this issue, p. 9), thus underscoring the missionary spirit to shape the ecumenical outreach, and overruling the organizational foundations to remove dilemmas resulting from differences of doctrine and order.

A united Christianity engaged with full heart in the fulfillment of the Church's mission would, of course, afford a strategic counter-blow to totalitarian and secular forces today. Christians everywhere will view with gratitude the new concern for mission. But, despite its enthusiasm for mission as the basis of unity, Oberlin left this very mission of the Church undefined. In reality, the constituent members of the WCC are as divided on the nature of the Church's mission almost as much as on questions of faith and order. The term "mission" itself is given both a narrow interpretation, in terms of evangelism and missions, and a broader meaning, with reference to the whole task of the Church. Some churches identify the work and life of the Church exclusively with social action and cultural concerns, defining ecumenical cooperation simply in terms of "whatever we can do together." It is not strange, therefore, that the missionary philosophy characterizing much contemporary ecumenical effort is itself under fire. Some critics detect a tendency to substitute ecumenism for evangelism; inter-church aid for missions; fellowship among Christians for outreach toward the unevangelized; fraternal workers for missionaries; consolidation for pioneering. (In Japan the unity of the

Kyodan, organized mainly on a pragmatic basis, is already threatened.) What will happen when and where the mission of the Church is interpreted mainly as the promotion of organizational oneness? Some observers regard the Oberlin sessions on the nature of unity as but a prelude to a conference on church union, an ecumenism more concerned for propagation of the gospel of Church unity than for the Church's evangelistic task. The question arises: Before mission can be a sufficient basis for ecumenical unity, must there not be consensus on the content of that mission?

•

Can the mission of the Church actually be defined without adequate reference to faith and order? The shift from faith and order to the alternative of mission as the basis of unity does not deal realistically with the viewpoint of large groups both inside and outside the WCC who contend that the mission of the Church is not isolated from but includes a specific content of faith, or of faith and order. Moreover, evangelicals question a unity in mission, for example, that enlists the Orthodox Church whose past history in Greece has been one of hostility to evangelical Protestant effort. The notion that mission can supersede theology in building the ecumenical movement seems to place the Church's mission in a non-theological setting. Is such a mission a sufficient criterion of unity? Can mission in fact be detached from concerns of doctrine? Of order? Is not the new WCC emphasis vulnerable to the constant threat of basic dichotomies? Dare we interpret Ephesians 4:5 in this Revised Ecumenical mood: "One Lord . . . (one mission) . . . one faith? . . . one baptism?" Is this an adequate reflection of New Testament unity? Did the early Church understand its unity in terms of action rather than of being, of purpose rather than of nature? Is the WCC engaged in recovering the past unity of the apostolic Church, or is it shaping its own novel and experimental unity?

Moreover, if the deepest criterion of genuine ecumenity is expressed by obedience to the Great Commission, should not the ecumenical movement recognize mission-active denominations and movements of Protestant church life unaffiliated with the WCC as genuinely ecumenical expressions though they dissociate themselves from the WCC because of their insistence upon a more specific statement of Christian doctrine? In relation to non-member constituencies, the ecumenical movement today finds itself in an awkward dilemma. Many leaders consider the absence of large groups such as National Association of Evangelicals, Southern Baptists, Missouri Lutherans, as in some sense a judgment upon the ecumenical movement. On the other hand, whenever unofficial overtures are made to non-member groups, the question naturally arises

whether the invitation to "come into the WCC" ungenerously implies the non-validity of these competitive ecumenical expressions.

CHRISTOLOGY AND CONFESSION

Ecumenical leaders doubtless will contend that the twin concerns of faith and mission have been merged into each other, rather than submerged one to the other, and that they do not expect the problem of unity to be resolved wholly on an exra-doctrinal plane. The relationship, they aver, is never serial but organic. To ask upon what mission we can engage before doctrinal agreement, or what doctrinal agreement is needed for a common mission, is for them too static an approach. They stress that the New Testament Church was united in its mission despite the absence of theological agreement at the level of the later ecumenical creeds. And in evidence of theological earnestness they point to WCC discussion on the basis of "Jesus Christ is God and Saviour" by which Amsterdam upgraded the formula "Lord and Saviour." (Some constituents, however, do not subscribe to the formula confessionally. Seventh Day Baptist leaders were unofficially reported at Oberlin as in the WCC not because they subscribe without reservation to the affirmation that Jesus Christ is God and Saviour, but because they regard the WCC mission as more important than doctrine-a statement that passed unchallenged in the section on doctrinal consensus and conflict.)

Doubtless the evangelical criticism of ecumenical theology too often fails to grasp the importance of this central Christological affirmation. Whatever its limitations, the confession bristles with relevance in a totalitarian age. Profession of Christ's lordship liberates the human conscience from the claims of state absolutism. Wherever a single believer recognizes Christ as God and Lord, there the existence of the totalitarian state is nullified. Communist awareness of this fact explains the persecution that Chinese Red leaders directed especially against the Christians who constituted only two per cent of the population. Moreover, the ecumenical confession emphasizes that the way to Christian unity lies through Christology, and aims to give to all discussion-including ecclesiology-a Christocentric character.

Yet the WCC confession of Christ as God and Saviour is not to be understood as a dogmatically defined statement. Even as a confession, the statement is capable of divergent theological expositions. Leaders in the WCC are far from agreement on Christology; their generalities (does the emphasis on the personal as against the doctrinal here really substitute an abstraction for the reality?) avoid a division over differences. The ready concentration on a simple Christological formula, moreover, is viewed as a symbol of theological

indifference as much as a symbol of unity. Will the latitude permitted beyond this initial requirement threaten the doctrinal purity of the Church? (Note Oberlin's unprotested offering of prayers for the dead, and the pulpit reading of *The Pastor of Hermas* alongside the Pauline epistles.) Does the disposition to tolerate, if not to recognize the validity of each other's confessions and practices require a pragmatic and expedient concession at the expense of the doctrinal?

The WCC confession is far too skeletal as a basis for virile Christianity. That Jesus Christ is God and Saviour is true but hardly the whole of vital New Testament teaching; actually, this statement includes less than the elements of confession necessary to salvation, namely, that Christ died for our sins and is risen (cf. Rom. 10:9-10, I Cor. 15:1-4). The accepted WCC formula is inadequate, therefore, to define the Gospel of Christ. Has not the Saviour and Lord already formulated the Christian organism and mission in more adequate terms? Foundational to the unity of the early Christians stood a biblical content at least as full as that of the Apostles' Creed.

Because the WCC confession is theologically barren, it is widely regarded as the foreboding antecedent of divisions that might have been avoided through doctrinal specificity. Especially evangelical Protestants protest the WCC's wholesale abridgment of the doctrinal basis of Christian unity. To them such reduction is a liability rather than an asset to Christian faith and witness. Some observers aver that unless the WCC arrives at a stronger confessional basis, it ultimately faces repudiation of the movement by some of its own member churches, or through indifference to revealed theology will succumb to intellectual deterioration of ecumenical Christianity.

This approach to the WCC confession, however, does not probe the deeper issues at stake.

For one thing, the WCC is increasingly disposed to issuing additional confessional statements. Such neoconfessionalism has emerged in many major communions that avoid absolutizing their own denominational convictions (cf. recent world confessions by Presbyterians and Lutherans), but issue wide pronouncements concerning the bearing of Christian belief upon threatening cultural trends of the time. These confessions, in turn, are given ecumenical interest and status alongside the early creeds.

The ecumenical movement as such has no apparent desire, however, to reintroduce doctrine as a *test*, but only as a *testimony*. That is, no disposition is evident to recognize the existence of divinely-revealed doctrines. The influential leadership of the movement distinguishes between faith and belief; doctrines are evalu-

ated more in terms of interpretation than of revelation. Assertedly, faith concerns the Word (not concepts and words); belief, whereby the Church articulates its faith, issues confessions only as a witness to the world, not in conformity to an authoritatively revealed declaration of what men must believe to be recognized as Christians.

The non-confessional groups, maintaining that all creeds are responsible to Scripture, decry and fear the growing confessional tendency in the WCC. The confessional groups, on the other hand, fear the WCC's possible power over the churches through the issuance of influential definitions of the faith. Both miss the major considerations. The real issues are: What is the basis of Christian authority? What is the relation of divine revelation to reason? What is the status of Scripture as a bearer of revealed truths or doctrines? These are the crucial factors. The old liberalism, now a waning influence in ecumenical meetings, struck its deepest blow at the historic Christian faith by dissolving the authoritative note in Protestantism, by sketching divine revelation in terms either of rationalism, voluntarism or emotionalism, and by rejecting Scripture as the authoritative rule of faith and practice. Has the formative leadership of the ecumenical movement provided an adequate alternative?

Evangelicals will continue to assess contemporary ecumenity's statement of unity and mission as given at the Oberlin sessions on doctrinal consensus and conflict by the following criteria: (1) The basis of Protestant authority. Is the Bible qualified by divine revelation and inspiration as the final and trustworthy authority in matters of faith and doctrine? (2) The importance of truth. Granting the danger of rationalizing revelation in speculative terms, and that doctrine has a view to Christian obedience, is it acknowledged that truth also has a legitimate existence for its own sake? Does divine revelation take the form both of deed and truth? Granted that religious commitment involves the whole self in relation to God, is it acknowledged that truth is essential to both faith and belief? (3) The person and work of Christ. Is it affirmed both that "Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ" and that "in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"? Many current formulations distinguish Jesus from "the Christ in Jesus," and prefer also to speak of "God in Jesus Christ" rather than of the personal deity of the God-man. Is it affirmed not only that men as sinners are justified by faith without personal merit, but also that they are supernaturally regenerated on the occasion of faith in the imputation of Christ's atonement as the ground of man's salvation?

Evangelicals are saddened by any unity in mission that relegates such verities of revelation to an optional, secondary status.

RACE RELATIONS AND CHRISTIAN DUTY

America is in the throes of great sociological change. Never has there been more need for Christian love and restraint. That the race issue has become political is to be deeply regretted. That the spiritual problem is ignored by some and stressed to the exclusion of sociological factors by others is equally regrettable.

In recent weeks incidents have arisen that should move every Christian with righteous indignation. The deliberate mutilation of a Negro in one city is one example; justice demands the severest penalty for those found guilty. Abuse accorded the few Negro boys and girls assigned to previously all-white schools by some young people in these schools has been a disgrace.

The unfortunate situation in Little Rock is eloquently appraised by a group of white and Negro ministers in that city expressing the Christian position in these words: "There is need for all to exercise constant and diligent prayer and a love which respects the dignity of all children of God and seeks equal justice for them. Because we have not walked in the way of the Lord we now find ourselves confused, disturbed and distressed. As Christian ministers we confess our own share in the corporate sin and guilt of our state and our own subjugation to the holy judgment of God. Our one hope in this hour of crisis lies not in our own ability to change ourselves, our people, or the social structure of which we are a part, but in the power and grace of God to bring order out of confusion, good out of evil and redemption beyond judgment."

In such situations (and they are not confined to the South) there is need for Christian love, sympathy and common sense. That the church should lead in Christian relations goes without saying. There are those who feel that she has been woefully slow in assuming her role of leadership in breaking down racial discrimination and injustice. In some instances the church has lacked courage in vindicating justice for all. But some leadership has shown more enthusiasm than good judgment, more zeal than understanding. Christian courtesy, love, humility and consideration form the only basis on which right race relations can be developed. There are vocal integrationists who themselves refuse to have social contacts with another race. There are segregationists whose personal dealings with those of another race put to shame some most ardently active on the other side. Each needs to learn from the other.

The Christian church should work for the elimination of every restriction, discrimination and humiliation aimed at people of any race. She should preach and exemplify love and compassion and consideration at all times. She should also refrain from confusing legal, spiritual, and sociological problems—for in so doing she is being neither Christian nor realistic. END

EUTYCHUS and his kin

THE SOUND BARRIER

Pastor Peterson dropped by last night after an evening of calls in the new Cloverleaf Vista subdivision. He wants a TV distance tuner that will fit in his coat pocket and operate so as to shut off any television set. To produce "snow" he said wouldn't be enough. Sight and sound must both go, too, or the calling pastor hasn't a chance.

We discussed other possibilities. The cord of the set is usually too inaccessible to trip over. The pastor has tried lowering his voice, and there are sensitive souls who will turn down the volume. Even these keep on looking. Standing in front of the set is sometimes an effective hint, he admitted, but usually he is firmly ushered to a chair in a corner. He has been forced to develop a two-minute talk which he can insert during a commercial. This is the one time, he reports, when TV viewers become conscious of a guest in the room.

At this point I urged him again to come in and sit down, but he declined, and left. As I returned to my favorite TV chair it occurred to me that perhaps this technique of the doorstep conversation was his latest solution.

Some of my "kin" may have sugtions for Pastor Peterson. Remember that he is an old-fashioned evangelical who insists on doing door-to-door evangelistic calling. It won't do to tell him to go home and watch television. I should add that he has had some success on late afternoon calls by taking four of his children along. Since the Petersons have no TV set, the youngsters need little encouragement to find a thoroughly juvenile program and block the screen completely. This method, however, has not been found ideal for a first contact call.

Can you help Pastor Peterson?
EUTYCHUS

REFORMED EPISCOPAL BISHOPS

Your issue of June 24 states that the Reformed Episcopal Church elected its first new bishop since 1920 at the recent meeting of its General Council in Chicago. May I point out that this statement is obviously erroneous. Since 1920 the following have been consecrated as bishops in the Reformed Episcopal Church:

Robert Westly Peach, Joseph Edgar Kearney, Frank V. C. Cloak, Howard David Higgins, William Culbertson, the last two having been consecrated in 1937.

FRANK E. GAEBELEIN

The Stony Brook School Stony Brook, Long Island

GOD'S IMAGE IN MAN

Kindly permit me to direct your attention to a review by G. Aiken Taylor (July 22 issue) of my book on The Basic Ideas of Calvinism. . . .

The reviewer writes of "an altogether negative approach to man's constructive behavior which results from Meeter's understanding of the doctrine of total depravity, an understanding which fails to take into account Calvin's pointed references to the image of God as marred but not wholly destroyed in man. Meeter's view (that the imago dei is wholly destroyed) necessarily colors his writing. Emphatically, the author does not subscribe to any idea that the image of God is wholly destroyed in man. Rather he would wholeheartedly maintain with Calvin, as can be gathered from the quotes from references to Calvin's writings in the book (The Basic Ideas of Calvinism, pp. 70-75), that the reason the image of God is not wholly destroyed in man lies precisely in the common grace of God. For if God had not restrained sin in the natural man, according to Calvin natural man would become worse than a furious beast or a violent overflowing river (p. 71). God's common grace makes possible many laudable and excellent deeds by sinful man as explained in the quotes from Calvin (pp. 70-72). God's common grace is therefore to Calvin the source of much "constructive behavior" even in pagans. The alternative, namely that man's constructive behavior is due to native qualities left in man, would have laid the author open to the charge that it was not the Calvinistic view of total depravity he was advocating but rather partial depravity of the Arminian stamp. According to Calvin man after sin did not retain the image of God in the narrower sense of true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. In the broader sense of the term, that of being a spiritual being, rational, moral and immortal, man

still has the image of God. Without these qualities he would cease to be human. I trust that the above will absolve the book from any charge that in it is maintained the view that the image of God is destroyed in man and of an altogether negative approach to man's constructive behavior. God's grace makes for constructive behavior.

H. HENRY MEETER Grand Rapids, Mich.

SHORT OF THE GOAL

Since somebody sends me Christianity Today, I occasionally glance over a copy—invariably my reaction is that my unknown benefactor is wasting his money, and I am wasting my time. I have never seen a periodical which strains so hard to achieve scholarly eminence and which falls so short of its goal.

Aside from the promotion of Billy Graham, CHRISTIANITY TODAY seems to be published primarily to compliment, propitiate, and flatter the liberals and infidels while ridiculing, insulting and denouncing those who stand for the Inspiration of Scripture and contend for the Faith.

It was my impression that at least all of the editorial staff (though perhaps not all of your correspondents) claim to believe in the Divine Inspiration and Infallibility of the Word of God but one would never know this was true from the average issue of the magazine.

Bob Jones University, Bob Jones, Jr. Greenville, S. C.

Your contribution towards making a Messiah out of "Billy" Graham is particularly obnoxious. In due time we shall find that he will do Protestantism in general more harm than good. . . .

FREDERICK A. STERNER
Trinity Evangelical and Reformed
Church, Reading, Pa.

We in Canada have been subjected long enough to the imperialism, religious and otherwise of the U.S.A. One of your least savoury influences has been the promotion in this country of religious vaude-ville by the unlimited number of evangelical fundamentalist and Pseudo-Christian cults and sects. . . . I would suggest that you provide a school in the depart-

ment of emigration for training emigrees in the fine art of gentlemanly and civilized mannerisms. . . . You would score a bigger hit in Canada if you through the medium of your newspaper dissuaded these aforementioned groups from interfering in the national religious life of Canada. . . .

PAUL E. GLOVER

All Saints' Anglican Church Calgary, Alberta

Christianity Today is one of the most valuable magazines I receive. In variety and general excellence of material—spiritual and intellectual—it is tops with me. . . I. L. Llewellyn Fields Methodist Church Shenandoah, Va.

It is a great joy to see the beginning of such a needed organ of such high calibre. . . . H. J. Bennett Jr. The Methodist Church Hemingway, S. C.

. . . Destined to take a leading position in evangelical literature. The warm, uniting and positive message may well help forge the bonds of a stronger evangelical Christianity tomorrow.

WILBERT D. GOUGH

Gilbert Meml. First Baptist Church Mount Clemens, Mich.

It is extremely helpful to have such current theological thought coming to my desk in the form you present it.

First Baptist Church G. F. GREENFIELD Breckenridge, Tex.

. . . An intellectual approach that is appealing. . . . Pendor, Neb. John Weborg

I have found Christianity Today a peerless theological publication. It allies clear utterance, deep scholarship, wonderful variety of subjects, rare equilibrium and moderation, to a sound theological position.

LIBRARIAN Seminario Presbiteriana Do Brasil Campinas, Brazil, S. A.

How thankful I am to receive your evangelical paper . . . I am 82 years of age . . . I had the joy of working with the late Dr. John R. Mott and Dr. Sherwood Eddy in India as a Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., Calcutta, and in . . . evangelism among the students . . . I was once a Hindu and now dying as a disciple of Christ . . . P. A. N. SEN Ranchi, Bihar, India

Especially do I appreciate the forthright stand you take relative to the problem of liquor advertising.

Listen Editor Francis A. Soper Washington, D. C.

Re the editorial "Dung and Scum" (July 8 issue), vilis means "cheap" ("vile" is turpis).

"Let an experiment be made on a cheap body" ran the conversation. "Cheap, do you call a body for which Christ did not scorn to die?"

A fine article all the same, and an outstanding issue. E. M. Blaiklock Auckland University College Auckland, New Zealand

Too long have we waited for such a voice as this in our wilderness world. First Baptist Church A. F. Ballbach Jr. Oneonta, N. Y.

INFANT BAPTISM

I read with great interest the very worth-while articles in the August 19 issue concerning "The Body Christ Heads." A very pertinent question was raised by W. Boyd Hunt. It is a question which has divided the Christian Church on a very basic and essential doctrine—the doctrine of infant baptism. I am grateful to God that about 95% of the "Body Christ Heads" has continued to teach and to follow this revealed practice of the first century church.

Mr. Hunt asks, "Where in the New Testament is infant baptism?" (p. 8). Has he never read Acts 10:47-48 or Acts 16:15 or Acts 16:33? There are others, but these are enough references from the established practice of Peter, Paul and others to answer his question. For example, what else but baptism of the whole family can be meant by the statement of Acts 16:33? Very plainly Scripture states, "And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." "His" certainly does not refer to his material possessions nor to the pets in the household. Any person ready to interpret Scripture with an open mind will have to interpret that statement to mean "his family," i.e., "his wife and children." Some would even include the family servants in this service of baptism. But "family" is sufficient to answer Mr. Hunt's question. I suggest that Mr. Hunt read the booklet by Dr. Albertus Pieters entitled, Why We Baptize In-KENNETH H. HESSELINK Laketon Bethel Reformed Church Muskegon, Michigan

MY DIARY

by

Cynthia Goodwin



The other day I made an important investment in my own children. Purchased The Book of Life from Bill Collins. Read from it every night to our youngsters. Bill's happy in his work, his own boss, too. Tells me John Rudin & Company, 1 publishers have openings for some representatives. Bill says he's never found a better company to work for.

Being a Sunday School teacher, I can appreciate the importance of placing good Christian literature in the hands of our students. It was at my suggestion that the Adult and Young People's Department in our Sunday School are switching over to NSSA lessons. We purchase them through Union Gospel Press.² They sent us \$1 worth of samples free!

The other day I ran across the best assortment of tracts I've ever seen. Attractive art work. Sparkling colors. Over 225 titles to choose from. Excellent salvation tracts. Tracts on swearing, drinking, false isms, tithing, holidays. Eleven for Christmas alone! Beautiful poetry and postcards for the sick. Faith, Prayer and Tract League 3 will send 40 samples free, plus a catalog.

It's a wonderful feeling to meet with our children every night and have family devotions. It's meant so much more to us since we've built a good sacred record library, too. Audio Bible Society made it possible for us to buy a record a month plus receive free a \$65 record storage cabinet. No contract.

Tom tells me our church is saving money by buying Mimeo Stencils, Ink, paper and equipment wholesale from Mishek Company.³ They have Stencils for every make duplicator. Every church worker and pastor should have their wholesale catalog. It's free. Tremendous savings.



Christmas is just around the corner. Was so happy to receive my sample shipment of Scripture Christmas cards from C. W. Boyer Company. Their Lord's Prayer Pen is amazing, too. You read Prayer thru lens in top of pen. We'll use our profits to equip our new rumpus room for Christmas. We're thrilled with this extra income. Boyer will send you wholesale list and jumbo kit, too.

Our Sunday School class received some valuable material that really sparked missionary interest. The Sudan Interior Mission? sent us copies of "African Challenge" to introduce us to their new campaign to place modern high speed printing presses in the heart of Africa. S.I.M. will send you or your Sunday School class their sample kit. How many can you use?

Have been reading an amazing exposé of Jehovah's Witnesses. Titled "Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave" by W. J. Schnell. So popular that in less than a year Baker Book House' has published 40,000 copies. Exciting, revealing. Everyone should have a copy. \$2.95 at all Christian bookstores. Or use coupon below. I'll be glad to see that it's sent you.

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A LAYMAN and his Faith

THE SECOND COMING IS NEWS

SHOULD THERE BE a sudden rending of the sky, a lightning-like flash, the sound of trumpets such as our ears have never heard—if Christ should suddenly appear in the sky with his holy angels—what would our reaction be?

And it will happen!

One of the most frequently mentioned truths of all Scripture is that Jesus Christ is coming again. In theological circles his return is spoken of as the doctrine of last things, or eschatology. Strange to say, it is probably the most abused and also the most neglected truth in all the Bible. While some simply ignore it entirely, others distort its teachings.

When Christ will come has been the subject of much foolish speculation. There are also some who become so interested in the details of events of that future time that they fall into wrangling among themselves. In so doing they have tended to becloud the transcendent fact that Christ is coming again.

Generally speaking, there are four schools of thought. There are some who flatly deny that Christ will return in person. We will not deal with this group here because many of them even question his uniqueness as the eternal Son of God and their position hardly comes within the purview of Christian consideration.

The chief differences of opinion, however, center around when he will come. There are the post-millennialists who believe in the gradual improvement of world conditions until the millennium comes, after which Christ will appear.

There is a second and larger group, the amillennialists, who believe in his return but also believe that the millennium described in Revelation 20 is figurative, not literal.

Finally, there are the premillennialists who believe in the imminent return of the Lord to set up his reign on the earth for a thousand years, after which Satan will be released for a short time finally to be destroyed by Christ and the armies of heaven.

¶ Because of the strong convictions held by many on these matters, few will be pleased by this article, but we feel constrained to write because so many good people are beclouding a transcendent and glorious truth by arguing over details which are of secondary importance. The truth of paramount concern is the inescapable fact that Christ is coming back to this earth.

As he ascended up to heaven after his resurrection, and while his disciples were gazing upward in amazement and awe, two men clothed in white suddenly stood by their side and said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go up into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

"This same Jesus . . . shall so come . . . in like manner . . . as ye have seen him go into heaven." These words are as clear and specific as words can be.

If this were an isolated statement at variance with the general teaching of Scripture, we might be led to look for some other meaning. But it fits in perfectly with what our Lord said on a number of occasions and the writers of the epistles and of Revelation reiterated again and again.

What a stupendous thought! What a portentous event! In the twentieth century we think of Christ as living two millenniums ago and, while we accept the fact of his resurrection, it is easy to give him, so far as his bodily presence is concerned, a place in past history. But we fail to realize that our own physical eyes may see him at any moment!

It is here that the tragedy of controversy over the second coming becomes most poignant. It is at this point that the tragic silence of many becomes all the more distressing.

If The doctrine of the second coming of Christ centers in the fact that he will return. On many occasions he affirmed this truth. Speaking to his confused and sorrowing disciples, he said: "Let not your heart be troubled. . . . I will come again." Again: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Repeatedly, he spoke to his disciples along these lines.

The Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostles, affirmed the same truth. In I Thessalonians 4:16 we read: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. . . ." In Revelation 1:7 we are told: "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

Christ speaks of it as being a sudden

event: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. . . ." He compares his return to the sudden destruction that came on Noah's generation; to the unexpected entrance of a thief at midnight.

¶ The imminent return of the Lord has been the comfort and hope of saints since his ascension. That he has delayed so long only emphasizes the fact that with him a thousand years are but a day. He is not slack in keeping his promise but rather he is longsuffering to sinful men, anxious that they might repent while yet there is time.

In enthusiasm for the truth of the second coming some confuse time and space as we know them with the infinitudes of God and eternity. Einstein with his theory of relativity, the splitting of the atom and probably yet undiscovered facts of the universe can well open up to us new vistas having to do with what Christ will do and how he will do it. There is a tendency to think this world and the universe of which it is a part will continue to be governed by laws as we now know them. Paul may have given a hint in I Corinthians 1:27-29; the God of creation can so easily use "things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

But even more reprehensible than setting up the details and schedules of events having to do with the coming of the Lord are the strange phenomena of silence and indifference. European theologians, far less certain of a man-made Utopia than some of their American confreres, urged the World Council meeting at Evanston two years ago to face squarely the doctrine of last things and in the subsequent discussions were far more inclined to follow a biblical approach than some in this country.

Why the resounding silence in so many American pulpits today? Why ignore a truth which is as clearly taught as any doctrine to be found in Holy Writ? Why deny to men today the thrilling fact that Christ is coming back and that he is the hope of the world? The inescapable fact is that Christ is coming back to this earth and there is no truth more calculated to galvanize attention, to promote right living and to generate witnessing zeal.

The early Church found the hope of his coming a constant source of comfort and a spur to righteous living. It can do the same for the Church today.

L. NELSON BELL



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THE WCC SEARCHES FOR VISIBLE UNITY

A perceptible shift of emphasis from faith and order to *mission* as the center of Christian unity marked the World Council of Churches' North American study conference Sept. 3-10 at Oberlin College, where the great evangelist Charles G. Finney was president during Civil War days.

Still ununified over "the nature of the unity we seek," the conference nonetheless issued an 800-word message calling upon "every local church and congregation to examine the way in which it makes visible the nature of the Church of Christ" and looked for "continuing advance in the practical unity of united action by churches and congregations." It spoke of a unity already achieved, and of a unity

still to be gained.

Greek Orthodox bodies (the Great Archdiocese of North and South America, the Rumanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America, the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America) dissociated themselves from the conference statement. Their spokesman, the Rev. Georges Florovsky, professor at Harvard Divinity School, complained that the draft was open to various interpretations: "We are embarrassed to accept phrases which if not ambiguous are elastic. Is there any sense in using glorious phrases that can be accepted with mental reservation by everyone, but which secure no real agreement?" While other delegates thought the statement wordy and weak, some considered it an exciting symbol of positive achievements.

A beehive of activity, Oberlin revolved for the week around section and division meetings leading up to plenary sessions. Representing five Canadian and 34 U. S. denominations or churches, 279 delegates discussed and debated the nature of unity with 92 consultants, and 39 observers from non-member denominations. Although



WCC leader Visser 't Hooft and Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan James exchange views on "the unity you need."

gathered on the first coeducational campus in the nation, women delegates (only two in the Methodist contingent of 40) were somewhat of an oddity. It was the first major ecumenical conference without organized protest by the American Council of Churches. Earlier ecumenical dispositions to dismiss non-participating groups as disruptive salients in the main movement of the Church's life, moreover, gave way to respectful deference to those whose consciences disallow official participation (Roman Catholics, Protestant evangelicals, including Southern Baptists, Missouri Lutherans and denominations represented by National Association of Evangelicals and American Council of Churches), and appreciation of the unofficial presence of consultants and observers. The message to the churches stated: "We are saddened

by the absence of members of other Churches whom we recognize as fellow-Christians, and we ask forgiveness for any failure of charity or understanding in us which may have kept them apart from our fellowship."

More was at stake in the quest for unity, however, than charity and understanding. While plenary sessions were circumspect, reflecting a level of minimal agreement, conference vitality existed mainly in section meetings in which discussion might more easily become debate, and dissension disruption. Differences of faith and order shadowed the gathering more than division reports (commended to the churches for study) reflect in their emphasis on an overarching unity. The high hopes of some delegates were disappointed, that Oberlin might create a stirring confession of belief relevant to the contemporary cultural crisis. Recurring emphasis of President John Mackay of Princeton Theological Seminary that ecumenical concerns be framed in terms of obedience rather than doctrine and structure, voiced in committees, sessions, divisions, and plenary meetings, did not gain sharp expression in the message to the churches, although it shaped a growing mood among the formative leadership at Oberlin, and is mirrored in the division reports (cf. the editorial "Unity and Mission" elsewhere in this issue). Significantly, however, the main Oberlin directive spoke to rather than for the churches.

Nonetheless, Oberlin had high hours. The passionate hope of surmounting Protestant disunity marked all sessions. Some of the best minds in many Protestant confessions came out of isolation into ecclesiastical encounter to wrestle with faith and order problems. Main divisions covering faith, order and cultural pressures subdivided into twelve sections; of these, that on "Doctrinal Consensus and Conflict" was strategic. With President Edgar M. Carlson of Gustavus Adolphus College (Augustana Evangelical Lutheran) as chairman, the 30 delegates included President Mackay of Princeton (Presbyterian Church U.S.A.), Dr. Walter M. Horton (Congregational Christian) of Oberlin, Dr. T. A. Kantonen of Hamma (United Lutheran), and Dr. Robert L. Calhoun (Congregational Christian) of Yale among the consultants in this section. In all sessions, the old liberalism was but a defensive minority view, although sullen survivors murmured off the record that "these neo-orthodox fellows have now

reacted against liberalism more radically than we did against fundamentalism a half century ago." Theological emphasis had moved far beyond the old scorn for central Christian doctrines to a devout appropriation of many biblical themes.

Evening public meetings left profound impressions on the delegates. Addresses by the Rt. Rev. Angus Dun, Episcopal bishop of the Diocese of Washington, D. C., Professor Calhoun of Yale, Dr. Albert C. Outler of Southern Methodist University, Dr. Joseph Sittler of University of Chicago, and Dr. Walter T. Muelder of Boston University, represented the movement at a high and sometimes stirring level. Beyond the horizontal level of agreements and differences reflective of the WCC's first decade, conscious effort was being made to shift discussion to the vertical level of divine confrontation and bequest. Professor Calhoun's address included as a dramatic turn a cautious reassertion of Christian trinitarianism in the tradition of the Protestant Reformers, reflecting views of a WCC committee (with representatives from Yale, Union and Hamma) in contrast with narrower Christological formulations.

Oberlin included, moreover, provision for refreshing and positive Bible exposition by Dean Walter J. Harrelson of University of Chicago Divinity School. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, WCC general secretary, told Sunday morning worshippers that "in the great encounter with other religions which have found new vitality, in the conflict with totalitarianism, in the struggle against cheap caricatures of the Christian Gospel, our cause lacks convincing power as long as we do not prove that we live under the authority of the same Word of God."

But the question of an objective index to Oberlin remains a difficult one. In the high public addresses, spokesmen were not formulating official positions binding upon WCC constituents. This was clarified by Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, vice president of the Oberlin conference and stated clerk of Presbyterian Church U.S.A., in his comment on complaints over German Bishop Johannes Lilje's remark that "we reject the notion that the Church needs that sort of historic guarantee of her continuity which is supposed to be given in the apostolic succession of bishops." Prodded by private protests of Protestant Episcopal and Polish National Catholic delegates, Dr. Blake stressed that the speaker had full right to voice his (Cont'd on page 30)

OBERLIN COMMENTS

Non-member observers of Oberlin sessions divided in their appraisals solicited by Christianity Today.

Father Gustave Weigel, noted Jesuit theologian of Woodstock College, gave Roman Catholic reaction: ". . . Today the language and spirit are contemptuous of the Liberal Theology . . . (and) also far removed from the concerns and approach of those Evangelicals called Fundamentalists. The present terminology could be called 'Catholicizing,' though more evangelical than genuinely Catholic in its dynamism . . . From the Catholic point of view . . . the primary issues were never faced . . . There was no accepted test for any theological statement. Rather, creedal tests were deprecated . . . In consequence, it was impossible to come to a common understanding of what the Church is; to tell what revelation is or how it can be decisively ascertained. In spite of this fundamental incapacity, all took it for granted that all belonged to the Church and that they were speaking for her . . . The Conference belief was activist, vague and its expression emotionally warm but intellectually baffling. Nor can the accepted formulas reveal the wide and contradicting varieties of the understanding of the terms. The Bible was always recognized as a normative expression of Christian doctrine. Yet there was no common understanding of what the Bible is or

how its authority can be exercised . . . The Catholic doctrine of Tradition was timidly approximated in the term 'the historical experience of the Churches.' . . . The unity of the churches in the Conference is more emotional and verbal than substantial . . . There is a strong tendency to make doctrinal statement a matter of less than primatial significance, if not of indifference. There is indeed some doctrinal unity in the conference, but on nothing decisive and crucial."

Dr. John W. V. Smith, Church of God: "Two aspects . . . seemed to stand out. The first was the abundance of strong affirmations of basic truth about the unity of the Church . . . The second was the very apparent difficulty in really apprehending these truths . . . Discussions often revealed many deep-seated prejudices and an unwillingness to look beyond particular traditions. At times presuppositions contrary to Biblical truth were evident. . . ."

The Rev. F. Burton Nelson, Mission Covenant Church: ". . . Reports from the various sections indicate a marked sensitivity to contemporary currents in Christian theology . . . There appears to be a fresh appreciation of what the Bible has to say . . . The majority of churchmen at Oberlin have seen that divisions in the Church are deeply rooted, and . . . not likely to be alleviated by sentimental approaches. . . ."

National Day of Prayer

Wednesday, October 2, has been proclaimed by *President Eisenhower* as a national day of prayer, according to annual custom initiated by joint resolution of Congress in 1952. The President urged that "each according to his own faith unite in prayer and meditation on that day" and "in constant dependence upon our Creator for the spiritual gifts required in the conduct of our affairs as individuals and as a nation . . . ask for wisdom and strength" in seeking the "welfare of all people through a just and lasting peace. . . ."

Cathedral's Fiftieth

Washington Cathedral marked the fiftieth anniversary of the laying of its foundation stone September 28-29. Observance events included special services at the cathedral and a dinner addressed by *Presiding Bishop Henry Knox Sherrill* of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The

Bishop of Coventry, Dr. Cuthbert Bardsley, preached the anniversary sermon.

New York, Baptist Target

Dr. Paul S. James, Pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, for the last 16 years, has been appointed by the Home Mission Board, as director of Southern Baptist work in the greater New York area. He will also become pastor of the Southern Baptist Chapel group in New York, which presently meets at the 23rd Street YMCA in downtown Manhattan and will soon be organized as the first Southern Baptist church in New York City.

In a statement to his church, Dr. James said: "This is a call to lead Southern Baptists in the establishment of churches in one of America's greatest mission fields. It comes in the wake of the Graham Crusade when the time seems ripe for constituting churches and missions according to the pattern being followed by Southern Baptists."

(Cont'd from page 29) convictions, yet did not commit the conference. Orthodox Bishop Athenagoras, who pronounced the benediction after Bishop Lilje's sermon the previous night, publicly told the plenary session: "A few more sermons like this... and the ecumenical consciousness is gone." Public addresses, therefore, were not definitive.

Some delegates considered "the Church at worship" the heart of the ecumenical enterprise, but this too had flutters. Variegated programs of worship and prayer, reflecting Greek Orthodox as well as more familiar Protestant traditions, are now an ecumenical commonplace. But initial announcements of a communion service were clarified to stress optional participation, because the WCC in accord with policy sponsors no such service. Greek Orthodox delegates chose not to exercise their option. Unprotested by participating groups, however, was the Greek Orthodox devotional service including prayers for the dead. Devotional life at Oberlin was no sure index.

Conference leaders spoke, in fact, of a prevalent ecumenical temper more than of the ecumenical mind. It was really an open question whether Oberlin signaled victory for the Great Dane (Kierkegaard) as fully as for the Great Tradition. In the emphasis on the priority of obedience over faith and order, in the phrasing of doctrinal concerns, and in the general formulation of positions, the neo-orthodox approach - although with many shadings-held initiative. Yet leaders were eager to preserve both evangelical and modernist participation in the dialectic. A theory of religious knowledge reflective of modern speculation was frequently evident in the dialectical relating of revelation to reason, in the disregard

of coherence as a criterion in religious commitment, in the capitulation of intellectual considerations to a more voluntaristic view of faith, and in invocation of the Bible as relative authority only.

This approach was blessed, in turn, by the tendency of the earlier Lund and Edinburgh conferences to relate study of the nature of the Church directly to the study of the nature of Christ, rather than to an adjustment at doctrinal borders. Taken as doctrine, the declarations on Christology were diverse and often inadequate, and the trinitarian emphasis did not survive in official reports. Prevailing. views were criticized for doing more justice to the humanity than to the deity of Christ, in view of a semi-Arian tendency that affirmed that Jesus is the Christ while refusing to speak of the full deity of the person. While Oberlin bristled, moreover, with appeals to the Word of God, and the emergence of biblical theology was identified as "one of the exciting developments of our time," the conference deleted from its statement to the churches an insistence that this development "does not constitute a return to . . . uncritical bibliolatry" because of possible effect upon the laity.

The major lack was Oberlin's failure to exhibit an unambiguous Protestant principle of authority. The hope for unity, some leaders stressed, lies in the ecumenical movement "studying the Scriptures together," but the controlling suppositions of such study remained diverse. In Oberlin the weather blew both hot and cold, both wet and dry. Religious journalists, some fresh from the Madison Square Garden phenomenon, found no revival atmosphere. The notion of a growing unity was more of a feeling than of anything logically demonstrable. This was no unique kairos, no time of decisive change, in the minds and lives of the delegates that could be refracted at the local level. Ecumenical leaders who looked for a breakthrough into the midrange of American life were disappointed. There was a feeling that Oberlin's conclusions were too much hastened and dictated by the time factor, by the necessity of reflecting sectional and divisional unity for the sake of plenary unanimities. In the one fellowship of Oberlin remained lonely souls-there to bear witness, professing to love the same Lord, vet unconvinced that the message to the churches faithfully reflected their differ-

Greek Orthodox delegates criticized the discussions both at the outset and conclusion as framed from an inadmissible viewpoint that the unity of the

Church has been lost and needs recovery, instead of permanently characterizing the body of Christ. They publicly pointed to the Eastern Orthodox Church as its visible and historical expression: "Since Pentecost she has possessed the true unity intended by Christ . . . She has been unassociated with the events related to the breakdown of religious unity in the West." Insisting that the Orthodox Church has kept the integrity both "of the apostolic faith and of the apostolic order," her delegates lamented the deletion from the program of "the most vital problem of ministry and that of the Apostolic Succession, without which . . . there is neither unity nor church." Before the week ended, German Lutheran Bishop Johannes Lilje remarked in a sermon that "Protestantism which is so frequently blamed for having sown the seed of disunity within Christendom, was neither the first nor the greatest schism which Rome had to suffer; the great schism of 1054 (900 years before Evanston) separated . . . the Eastern church from its Latin lord."

Orthodox delegates justified WCC membership under the category of "witness." [Roman Catholic spokesmen, off the record, say that the Greek Orthodox Church has no business in the WCC, but are nonetheless glad she is in, because Orthodox leaders "say many things we would say."] Although officially distributed, the Orthodox statement was largely ignored until a Jesuit observer asked the section on doctrine why there was no comment on it. The Greek Orthodox delegate promptly gave answer: his church's claim to be the Una Sancta is avoided as an unpleasantry in the Protestant search for unity (which supposes that none of its members has given adequate expression to all the truth), vet for having invited the Eastern Orthodox Church into the WCC, Protestantism must pay the price of hearing that claim. "Sometimes we Orthodox feel much out of place, and even wonder whether we speak the same language," he added, "but we value the Protestant search for unity, and bear witness in it; if we were to withdraw, the WCC would become simply a pan-Protestant endeavor."

In his opening address Bishop Dun took note of misgivings produced by the conference title. But it did not necessarily exclude, he said, a given spiritual unity among believers, nor imply such division that the one Church must search for and restore its unity, but reflected rather that the Church's presence is to be acknowledged in other churches, and that others stand outside the unity that is given.

TO MINISTERS

Living in Southern New England

You can be of real service to many families and give your own family many extras they need by devoting a small part of your week to interesting and rewarding part-time work that ties directly to your profession. We plan to add several ministers or theology students to our staff on a part-time basis. You would be using your understanding of people for a humanitarian service offering a high earning potential. Within 50-mile radius of Boston or Providence. Car necessary. Flexible hours. Your inquiry will be welcome and kept in strict confidence. If you are interested, please write Box A.B.C. Christianity Today, 1014 Washington Building, Washington, D. C.

Later named chairman of the plenary sessions, Bishop Dun voiced "the ecu-menical sorrow": "For at least 35 years I have been engaged in such conversations. . . . If you are like me, you will find, as you meet your brothers and sisters coming out of their own particular households of faith, that you cannot think lightly or contemptuously of what has nurtured them, even though you should not be at home where they are at home. And you will experience afresh the sorrow of realizing that they go back and you go back into households or structures of faith and prayer and allegiance that in many ways separate you from them and fail grievously to make manifest our unity in Christ. This sorrow can turn you into a patient seeker for the household in which we could all be at home."

Nature of Ministry

The ministry of Jesus Christ continues in the world today as the Church participates in his ministry. The bourgeois, middle-class churches of America are very imperfect, but nevertheless the true Church is in them. The Church must continually struggle to get its message and forms from the New Testament rather than from the secular culture. The special ministries of the clergy are instrumental and come from the primary unit of the congregation in Christ dwells.

These were some of the emphases of four notable addresses delivered at the Fourth National Triennial Conference of the Inter-Seminary Movement at Oberlin, Ohio (Aug. 27-Sept. 1), at which 500 theological students and professors from 64 seminaries of 23 denominations met to consider "The Nature of the Ministry We Seek."

Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, General

Secretary of the World Council of Churches, in his keynote address, "Slaves and Spokesmen," referred to the renewed search for authority in the world today, pointing out that there is no Christianity without accepting the final authority of Jesus Christ, concerning whom the Church must declare, "Thou are the Son of God." The ministry must be above

living Word, known only through the Scriptures; "If there is ever to be a theological renaissance in America it will involve the rediscovery of the Greek New Testament." "Preaching has to do with events, facts, the great reality"; consequently, there is only one kind of valid

all else the ministry of the word, the

preaching, expository preaching.
Dr. James I. McCord, Dean, of Austin (Texas) Presbyterian Seminary,

speaking on "Flunkies and Soothsayers," charged that the ministry as we know it in American churches is a luxury the rest of the world cannot afford. He contrasted the typical American ministerial student and minister with a simplehearted lay-minister who works as a hod carrier all week and ministers evenings and Sundays in poor communities of Latin America. Although not arguing against a trained ministry, he believes the congregation is in the ministry, and deplored the term "layman" which too often implies an incompetent and unskilled person. "It is not the minister who should organize the congregation; it is the congregation which should organize its ministry of preaching, of oversight, and of mercy." The Church needs to focus less attention on ministerial "orders" and give greater heed "to God's ordering us within the body of Christ."

Dr. Paul Lehman of Harvard Divinity School spoke on "Society's Elite and Christ's Elect." In the Old Testament the people who were called as God's elect assumed this made them society's elite; they confused their theological terms with sociological ideas. Under the new covenant the Church is constantly in tension between being society's elite and Christ's elect. The elite count their blessings, but the elect are troubled by them. The elite want to be seen, but the elect sit with publicans and sinners. The elite are respectable and conforming, but the elect must be non-conforming and challenging to the world order. He showed that the goal of the Christian life is maturity, possible only within the fulness of the Christian community. The congregation "must be the vital center and not the dead center of the church."

The American theological student today is living "the distracted life," said Dr. Daniel Day Williams of Union Theological Seminary, New York. Theological education is being blocked, he said, by "too many courses, too many subjects, too many lectures, too many papers, too many selections to be read from too many books, instead of rereading and digesting those that can be mastered only through prolonged attention." Dr. Williams said the greatest lack in American seminaries is in the field of Christian ethics, dealing with questions of what to do in contemporary situations, on Christian ground. Practical studies in the seminary are important to help the minister continually bring to bear on the life of the Church valid criteria upon which to judge its work; "the theological school is the Church in its most intense and concentrated activities."

BIBLE BOOK OF THE MONTH

(Cont'd from page 18) intriguing that, with the way the Jews distributed portions of the Law over two-month periods, Psalms 1, 42, 73, and 90, the first psalms in each of the first four books of the Psalter, would be read as each of the first four books of the Law was begun. There is even plausible reason, too intricate for mention here, for the lack of correspondence in the case of the beginning of the last book of Psalms, which starts with Psalm 107.

USEFUL PSALM STUDIES

Useful material on the Psalms, somewhat in order of priority for the minister:

A work midway between the very technical and the too popular is John Paterson's The Praises of Israel (Scribner's, 1950). It would whet one's appetite for more thorough works such as W. E. Barnes' two-volume The Psalms, (Dutton, n.d.); W. Graham Scroggie's three-volume Psalms (Pickering & Inglis, rev., 1949); and Elmer A. Leslie's The Psalms (Cokesbury, 1949). One of the very thorough studies, which would be still more adequate for detailed information on a given psalm, is the three-volume Commentary on the Psalms by Prof. Delitzsch (Hodder & Stoughton, 1894). A quite careful study is Joseph Alexander's The Psalms, (Zondervan, repr. 1864 ed.). Spurgeon's The Treasury of David has a continuing relevancy (Zondervan, repr. 1881 ed.).

A very commendable specialized work on six psalms, with a general introduction, is Norman Snaith's Hymns of the Temple (SCM, 1951). Somewhere, one ought to have a look at T. H. Robinson's The Poetry of the Old Testament (Duckworth, 1947). Pertinent applications are found in Harold Bosley's Sermons on the Psalms, (Harper, 1956). Specially rich in devotional thoughts is F. B. Meyer on the Psalms (Zondervan, repr. n.d.).

Within commentary sets, of course, there are indispensable studies. Calvin's commentaries, urged even by James Arminius for all his students, include five volumes on the Psalter (Eerdmans, repr., 1949). An excellent study is in Charles Simeon's Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible, Vols. 5 & 6 (Zondervan repr., 1956). Most important is the upto-date treatment in The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 4 (Abingdon, 1955).

Three of the scheduled 55 volumes of Luther's Works are now published, two of which (Vols. 12 & 13) are on the Psalms—and against the papists: (Concordia, 1955-56). J. Kenneth Grider

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Books in Review

TRAGIC RETURN

The Pulpit Rediscovers Theology, by Theodore O. Wedel, Westminster, Philadelphia. \$3.50.

This is an exceedingly important book: important for its thesis that the Church must return to a vital theology if it is to be a true fellowship of reconciliation offering salvation to truly lost men; and important for the way it manages to evade classical Christianity when it paints its picture of a return to "true Biblical Theology." The author believes passionately that the quest for the historical Jesus was a mistake-the pulpit, to be effective, must preach a dogmatic gospel about a divine Christ. But he does not mean the Christ of orthodoxy. Yet he sounds the most refreshing, stimulating, evangelical note that I have yet heard rung out by the new theology of our day. For this contrast, the book is a must for every person concerned about modern trends in

The closer neo-orthodoxy comes to historic Christianity and the more nearly it discovers how it can comfortably speak the historic language of the Church, the more potentially dangerous it is. Niebuhr, in a sense, sowed the wind with his new anthropology, appropriating such historic terms as original sin, guilt, creation, the fall, but assigning symbolic meanings to them which robbed the human predicament of its reality. Niebuhr, acknowledging his own limitations, indicated that another must take up the crusade and add a soteriology to his new anthropology.

The present book reaps the whirlwind of Niebuhr's sowing, with a soteriology which all but diehard liberals will view with reverent awe and many evangelicals will embrace with delight because of its apparent apostolic fervor.

Dr. Wedel's theme is mouth-watering. In the Incarnation, faith does not see just a great example or master teacher, but Deity itself coming to enter into a new relationship with sinful man. The pulpit which truly preaches the Good News cannot limit itself to an ideal or a code of ethics, but must proclaim a vital theology which has power to save from sin and then sanctify unto eternal life.

Remarkable quotations appear within the book: "(Our people) look to us not for inexpert advice as to how to vote in an election, but for light from another world on this world." "We have senti-

mentalized the law and called it an ideal. We have reduced Christ from God to human prophet and moral hero. We have preached discipleship and the imitation of Jesus, not realizing that this, too, when isolated from the Good News of the Cross and the Resurrection, is burden, and not Good News." And, "Christ must be met as living Lord, as the power of the Holy Spirit, or there can be no death of the sinner and no resurrection."

Good? Indeed it sounds thrilling. What then can be wrong with it? Here we face the one great question of our day: Are the great affirmations of biblical theology references to literal reality or are they mere symbols of truth essentially philosophical and existential - and what difference does it make? No one denies that the Bible contains symbols in profusion. But are the historic doctrines of the Christian faith merely symbolic of "truth" or do they truly affirm reality? And if they represent literal truth, can the denial of their literalness truly save?

The author frankly confesses that his theology is "new" but he declares that it follows no single modern school. He is rather sympathetic toward the entire "diverse movement" in theology. He "cannot go back to the fundamentalist biblical literalism." He "cannot possibly" take literally the miraculous in the Bible. Critical historians, he declares, have freed us from the slavery of a literalist Bible.

Original sin is a state of self-centeredness which separates man from God and which includes guilt only as a "feeling." Grace is the word used to describe the various biblical references which have reunion as their theme. Grace means reunion and its perfect opposite is disgrace (wearing the wrong dress at a party). There is no hint that grace may denote a supernatural power or initiative on the part of a personal Being. Christ is exalted and the Holy Spirit frequently mentioned, but the Christ of God was incognito in the historical Jesus and today being "in Christ" is a matter of being in the organized fellowship of the redeemed, to which Christ has "returned" as its Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the place where Dr. Weber makes his position most clear is at the point of his eschatology. For him, the Church's theology respecting last things is frankly symbolic. Following C. H. Dodd, he declares that the doctrine of last things confronts the Church with the

fact of death and with the fact that the decision we make for or against God is fateful for eternity as well as time. Contemporary theology, he affirms, can no longer accept the orthodox structure of doctrine concerning life after death. With Aulen he affirms that juridical categories can no longer be applied to eschatology. And then he says, "We cannot conceive that God will limit the offer of His love to that fraction of the human race which has had the good fortune to hear the story of the Cross."

To me there is tragedy in the enthusiastic "return" of modern theology to the "gospel." It is not without significance that little evidence of guilt, or anguish of spirit, appears in the glib confessions of those who report that for years they followed a blind alley but now know more perfectly the Way. Where is the heartache for the multitudes who followed them up their blind alley and perished in the dead end?

G. AIKEN TAYLOR

DEVOTIONAL VALUES

Indebted to Christ's Resurrection, by C. W. Gault, Pageant, New York. 1956. \$3.00

The author's interest in studies of the Life of Christ, developed in seminary days, has increased in years that followed, and a sample of the fruit from his study in one area, the resurrection of our Lord, is incorporated in this volume. In its conception, the book follows the plan of an anthology. Each chapter begins with a verse or more of Scripture text, then the comments of various authors follow. Occasionally Mr. Gault adds something of his own, principally to provide smooth

Although the author has kept abreast of modern writings on the resurrection, he has a distinct preference for the old masters, quoting most largely from H. Latham, H. M. Paynter, W. G. Schauffler, H. B. Swete and T. V. Moore. For the most part, the emphasis falls on the devotional values of the resurrection accounts, but the critical is not ignored. The reader comes away with a sense of firmer grounding in this cardinal truth of our faith and feels his soul refreshed in the multifarious values of the resurrection for Christian life.

Many are the volumes which touch the resurrection in some fashion. This one is steeped in it. Every verse of the gospels dealing with the subject comes in for consideration, and the material is woven into a pattern which moves from the empty tomb right on to the ascension.

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